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MOSCOW KUCHKOVO POLLE

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BBK 68.5/7

i90

History of Russia's military strategy / Ed. V. A. Zolotareva. — M.: Kuchkovo field; Polygraphic resources, 2000. 592

with.

In the work offered to the reader, for the first time in Russian historiography, the complex path of development, the characteristic features and specific features of the domestic military strategy are revealed, the historical roots, stages of its formation, formation and development, starting from the 10th and, in fact, until the end of the 20th century, are explored.

A significant place in the book is occupied by showing the national identity of the military strategy of Russia in the pre-revolutionary era and in the Soviet period they paid attention to the theory and practice of military strategy in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union, to an analysis of the changed conditions and new approaches to the development of Russia's military strategy for the near and long term. last decade of the twentieth century. An important part of the book is made up of diagrams and tables that contribute to a comprehensive disclosure of the subject of research.

This work is intended to contribute to the development of rational military-strategic views, taking into account both positive and negative experience, which, over the long path of development of the highest field of domestic military art, has become an invaluable national historical asset.

This work is intended for specialists, generals. admirals, officers of the Armed Forces and a wide range of readers interested in the military history of the Fatherland, issues of military strategy.

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1\$VM 5-86090-064-3

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INTRODUCTION

The national security of the modern Russian state is now based on a more complex than before complex of multifaceted political, diplomatic, economic, technological, ideological, military and other measures. Of decisive importance among them were and are means of a predominantly political nature, aimed at creating a favorable external and internal environment for the country, eliminating existing and potential military threats, their localization, strengthening the international position of the state, ensuring stable geopolitical positions, reliable protection of its interests from outside encroachments and the resolution of emerging conflicts by peaceful means. However, these measures can be effective only if they are organically combined with military defensive actions, actively deterring a potential aggressor, blocking his attempts to exert political and economic pressure, and even more so by force of arms to achieve political goals.

In different periods of Russian history, military means either came to the fore, or were relegated to second place, or acted as the last, decisive means of protecting the statehood of Russia. Sometimes they actively served the implementation of the imperial Russian policy, but most often they ensured the protection of the state from aggression, its defense, freedom and independence from outside encroachments. In any case, the more irreconcilable and active Russia's foreign expansionist policy became, the greater the role played by military force. On the contrary, the more Russia was interested in maintaining

international stability, the less important in its foreign policy was the direct use of the armed forces.

One way or another, the entire history of Russia, as well as that of most other states, is organically connected with its repeated participation in defensive or offensive wars, armed clashes and conflicts. Periods of peaceful development both in the distant past and in our time have been interrupted more than once by years of war hard times. Since ancient times, Russia had to repel numerous enemy invasions, when its fate hung in the balance. At the same time, she repeatedly acted as a defender of other friendly peoples and countries, helping them to defend their freedom and independence. At the same time, the Russian Empire itself in many cases undertook major campaigns of conquest, strengthening its position in the world and expanding state borders. The growth of the Russian state was carried out not only as a result of voluntary accession to it

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neighboring countries seeking protection from enemies in it, but also by conquering other nationalities and states by force of arms.

In any case, the military aspects of ensuring Russia's national security were based on the solution, in one combination or another, of a complex set of military-political, strategic, economic, diplomatic, scientific and technical tasks. Of particular importance here was the elaboration of a rational military policy that strictly corresponded to the specific situation and the political goals arising from it, which faced the army and the country, and its real economic and military capabilities. In accordance with this policy, the military organization of the state was created, a military doctrine was formed, and a national military strategy was determined and carried out.

Of course, in past eras and in our time, all these structural elements of the military security mechanism had different meanings, as a rule, they differed in their content and nature. However, certain general principles did not cease to operate, due to historical traditions, national traits of the people, as well as the peculiarities of the geographical and geopolitical position of the Russian state, which, having a certain stability, were manifested in one way or another at all stages of its development. To a large extent, they retain their strength even now.

If we talk specifically about the military strategy of Russia, then such special enduring features could include: national identity, reliance mainly on its own national forces; continentality; peripheral orientation; sequential neutralization of threats from the west, east and south; proportional development of forces with a priority rate on ground forces; resoluteness of actions, flexible combination of offensive and defense, positional and maneuver forms of struggle.

This work is devoted to revealing these common features and the characteristic specifics of the Russian military strategy, the complex chain of its evolutionary development and sharp revolutionary leaps, especially in recent decades. Its main goal is to reveal the historical roots and origins of the national military strategy, the stages of its formation and improvement; explore the features of Russia's military strategy in the pre-revolutionary era and in the Soviet period; to establish the pattern of its formation at the present stage, in the conditions of the reorganization of the Russian state. At the same time, the main attention was supposed to be paid, first of all, to the theory and practice of military strategy in recent years, to an analysis of the changed conditions and new approaches to the development of Russia's military strategy for the near and long term.

Naturally, Russia's military strategy cannot be considered in isolation from the general process of the development of military art in the world. Its basic principles, categories, provisions, guidelines and requirements are closely linked with the achievements of the military strategy of other states. The Russian military strategy, taking into account everything useful, used them to achieve its goals, or developed a line of counteraction to the strategic efforts of the enemies, countering them with its strategic plans and methods of action against the strategic efforts and actions. In this dialectical intertwining, Russia's military strategy, while constantly enriching itself, at the same time had an inverse effect on the strategy of other countries. Therefore, it is impossible to understand its essence and content without a parallel consideration of the general foundations of military strategy. As you know, military strategy, being an integral part of military art, its highest area, covers the theory and practice of preparing the country and the armed forces for war, planning and conducting war and large-scale strategic operations.

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The theory of military strategy as a system of scientific knowledge studies the regularities, nature of war and methods of its conduct, develops the theoretical foundations for the use of the military forces of the state to achieve political goals, planning, preparing, waging war and strategic actions of all kinds. As an area of practical activity, military strategy is engaged in resolving issues related to the definition in specific conditions of the strategic tasks of the armed forces and the forces and means necessary for their implementation, the development and implementation of measures for the training of the armed forces, theaters of military operations, the economy and population of the country to war; planning of war and strategic operations; organization of the deployment of armed forces and their leadership in the conduct of operations of a strategic scale, as well as the study of the corresponding capabilities of a potential adversary.

Strategy as a field of practical art, military leadership activity of military leaders (highest level) has been known since ancient times. The theory of strategy, as an integral part of military science, was formed much later as a result of the generalization of the accumulated military-historical experience, the systematization and development of knowledge about the war. Her role is growing rapidly. Now it is becoming crucial not only in terms of a correct understanding

increasingly complex military phenomena, but also the realization of the ever-expanding possibilities of military art in the light of the extremely high demands placed on it.

There are two levels of military strategy: the strategy of waging war as a whole and the strategy of waging large-scale operations. They are united by common principles, but differ in scope, the nature of the issues under consideration, the content of tasks and approaches to their consideration.

The strategy of warfare is connected with the development of its general problems, the immediate, subsequent and further political and strategic goals, the sequence and order of their achievement, the forms and methods of preparing and conducting armed struggle, the definition and implementation of political, diplomatic, economic and proper strategic plans for war, individual military campaigns, the creation of the necessary material base for this and its use, the organization of the deployment of forces, the conduct of economic and military mobilization. At this level, the general character of actions in war, political and military maneuvering of forces, and ways of successfully ending the war are worked out. This area is of decisive importance for evaluating long-term forecasts and determining the prospects for war.

The strategy of conducting operations deals with the components of war, determines the systems of operations of the state's armed forces in the conduct of various wars, the goals, forms and methods of strategic actions. At this level, the development of plans of operations and strategic actions, the procedure for coordinating the efforts of various branches of the armed forces, the procedure for preparing theaters of military operations and the organization of command and control of the armed forces are established.

Of course, one cannot ignore the conventions of such a division, but the more complex the war becomes, the more acute the need for such a conditional division becomes.

Both in the past and even more so at the present time, military strategy occupies a leading, dominant place in the art of war. It dictates the starting requirements for operational art and tactics, sets tasks for them, defines common goals, the achievement of which they must be subordinated to. Battles and operations that do not correspond to the conditions of the strategy may ultimately turn out not only to be useless, but also to become the cause of defeat. At the same time, as before, tactics and operational art provide the source material for strategy, and it is through them that strategy basically realizes its potentialities. Of course the traditional

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the interdependence between strategy, operational art and tactics, in which tactical successes are summed up in operational success, and the sum of operational successes gives the final strategic result, becomes not so simple. Military strategy now has at its disposal powerful means enabling it to achieve its goals directly. In turn, the results of operational actions can sometimes be very significant, and reach a strategic level.

An analysis of world and local wars, as well as military conflicts, shows that one of the effective forms of armed struggle was partisan actions. They were distinguished by high efficiency, especially when the goals, tasks and interests of the state progressive forces that used partisan forms of struggle and the regular army completely coincided with the interests and tasks of the majority of the country's population, as was the case, for example, in the Patriotic Wars of 1812 and 1941. —1945

The relationship between military strategy and politics, diplomacy, economics, and ideology is becoming much more complex. Military strategy, as at all times, is entirely subordinate to politics, determined by it and serving it. In any case, politics today, to an even greater extent than ever before, has a decisive influence on military strategy, determines its goals, tasks, character and general direction. It prepares the war, forms the material base and creates a favorable environment for its conduct, mobilizes all the forces and resources of the state for the conduct of the war. Proceeding from the requirements of the policy, the methods of strategic actions of the armed forces, the main and secondary theaters of war, the main objects of the application of military efforts, allies and opponents are selected. As evidenced by modern and recent history, a short-sighted policy pushes the strategy to adventure. Its mistakes and miscalculations have a decisive effect on the course of hostilities. On the other hand, military strategy has a powerful feedback effect on politics. In any case, during a war, and sometimes even before a war, politics is often forced to reckon with considerations of military strategy, to limit or revise its goals and methods for achieving them. Moreover, there are cases when the military factor becomes decisive for some time.

Unfortunately, the prevailing opinion that politicians should deal with politics and the military with defense issues is extremely erroneous. Politics in its pure form does not exist. It is viable and effective only when it takes into account economic, socio-political, ideological and defense aspects in the aggregate. If one of these components is underestimated, the policy becomes flawed. Therefore, politicians and the military need to work hand in hand. Figuratively speaking, the prelude to the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people and its dynamics should become a textbook not only for politicians, but also for those government officials on whom the country's military security depends. On June 22, 1941, as a result of the inconsistency of their actions, the army was placed in an unnatural position: in the conditions of the aggression that had begun, it was forbidden to cross the border when launching counterattacks. Many commanders cautiously gave the order to open fire on the enemy.

As a rule, the efforts of military strategy and diplomacy are coordinated with politics. At the same time, on the eve and during the war, diplomacy is usually subordinated to the interests of military strategy, is actively used in order to push the process of political isolation of hostile states, to win over possible

More aims, to achieve a favorable orientation of neutral countries, to strengthen the political positions of their own state and friendly alliances, to upset the enemy coalition. In general, it is designed to contribute to the creation of such an environment that would make it possible to avoid military clashes at an undesirable moment and

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formation of an unfavorable international situation. In some cases, it can also act as one of the means of strategic disinformation in the interests of solving certain military tasks.

But the main thing is that over time, the direct and indirect dependence of military strategy on the economy is constantly increasing. Economic conditions have a multifaceted and versatile influence on strategy. They are usually the root cause of the emergence of wars, determine its nature and forces, means and methods of waging. Ultimately, the course and outcome of a war, the shape of the armed forces, and their potential depend on the economic factor and the material resources of the state. This determines the direction of military strategy and its planning.

At the same time, military strategy also has an inverse effect on the economy. When making all economic decisions, the country's leadership, one way or another, has to reckon with the demands of a possible war. Based on strategic considerations, the location of industry is determined, production and science are developing in a targeted manner, new technologies are being developed and introduced, and stocks of material resources are being created. With the outbreak of war, the economy is completely shifted to a war footing: industry, agriculture, transport and communications are being mobilized, the structure of production is changing, labor and material resources are being redistributed, and the country's financial system is being rebuilt. All this is becoming a primary condition for the successful implementation of the principles of strategy, not only in large-scale, but also in local wars.

A close organic relationship exists between military strategy and ideology. It manifests itself in various aspects: in the order of the influence of ideology on the nature of the strategy, the use by the strategy of the means and methods of ideological struggle to strengthen its armed forces and the forces of the people, the psychological weakening of the enemy, the consideration of the moral factor in strategic decisions and actions. And here, too, there are both direct and reverse links, since an effective strategy actively promotes the growth of the moral and spiritual forces of the army and the people, the strengthening of certain ideological principles. Finally, the relationship between military strategy and the state's military doctrine should also be taken into account. A rational strategy usually proceeds from the requirements of military doctrine and is guided by them in solving practical problems. At the same time, to one degree or another, it is based on the data of military science, as well as on the conclusions and solutions of military problems of other social, natural and technical sciences.

The content and nature of military strategy, as well as its place and role in the art of war, are not permanent. They arose, changed and developed in each country depending on the socio-political system, politics, the state of the economy, geographical conditions, national traditions of the people and other factors.

Military strategy began to take shape with the advent of the army and the emergence of wars. Its formation is associated with the formation of slave-owning states. In the wars of this period, especially Ancient Egypt, the Greco-Persian wars (V-III centuries BC), the Punic wars (III-II centuries BC), the Gallic campaigns of Julius Caesar and many others, were born and such principles, methods and forms of the strategic use of armed forces as surprise, concentration of efforts in decisive directions against the main enemy, maneuvering, siege of fortresses, naval blockades, etc. began to have a significant impact on the course and outcome of hostilities.

The development of military strategy as an art was greatly influenced by the practical military activities of the great generals of antiquity: Epaminondas, who was the first to apply the principle of uneven distribution of troops along the front in order to

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concentration of forces for the main attack on the decisive sector, Alexander the Great, who organized and conducted military operations on the basis of a far-sighted, deeply thought-out war plan, carefully coordinated the efforts of the army and navy, sought to completely crush the enemy, consolidate the occupied territories in the political and military relations, turned the cavalry into the main striking and maneuvering force of the troops. The strategic creativity of the Carthaginian commander Hannibal, who attached decisive importance to the correct assessment of the military-political situation, the organization of reconnaissance and the clear interaction of infantry with cavalry, was distinguished by special features. A significant contribution to the strategy of that time was made by Julius Caesar, who, like Alexander the Great, showed special concern for the development of war plans, the coordinated use of various means and forms of struggle, dismemberment of the enemy and defeating him in parts.

The first attempts to bring the accumulated knowledge in the field of strategy into a system were made by the generals and historians of Ancient China - Confucius, Sun Tzu, Wu Tzu. They summarized and formulated some general rules for the conduct of war, which have not lost their significance even now. Later, the so-called "Behistun Inscription" appears, containing generalized information about the campaigns of the Persian king Darius in Central Asia. The "History" of Herodotus was devoted to a versatile study of the Greco-Persian wars, and the "History" of Thucydides was devoted to the wars of ancient Greece. Important positions on military strategy were revealed in the works of the prominent ancient Greek thinker Xenophon ("Anabasis", "On the art of equestrianism"), in the works of Julius Caesar ("Notes on the Gallic War", "Notes on the Civil War"). At the beginning of a new era, the first generalized military-theoretical works appeared. Significant of them: "Instruction to the military leaders" Onisander (in

and (beginning of centuries BC), "On Military Affairs" by Vegetius (390-410), etc. These works dealt mainly with issues of tactics and training of troops, but also contained some fundamental guidelines for the conduct of war as a whole.

For all its diversity, the military strategy of the states of the slave-owning era was subordinated to their political goals, based on the slave-owning economy with the ensuing low level of development of military equipment. The most important turning point at that time was the improvement of edged weapons, the creation of heavy defensive weapons and siege weapons.

Already at an early stage, the basic elements of strategic planning and leadership of the armed struggle took shape. Specific approaches were determined to the choice of the moment of the beginning of the war, the objects of the main attack, the place and time of the battles. Subsequently, as the scale of the armed struggle increased, the duration of military campaigns increased (from several weeks to several years and even tens of years), and the groupings of the fighting sides became more powerful. Accordingly, the military strategy became more complicated. The principles of waging war against several adversaries at the same time, in different theaters of military operations, were developed, and the procedure for creating strong bases for the deployment of military operations was determined.

The transition to a new socio-economic formation - feudalism - also meant a transition to a new stage in the development of strategy. During the period of early feudalism (V-XI centuries), due to the state fragmentation of Western Europe, the strategy of conducting numerous wars between small feudal states with limited goals, the use of knightly, mercenary and militia armies acquired the most important importance. At the same time, the strategy of wars was being improved in the East, with the use of significant military masses for broad conquests. Of great importance at this time was the achievement of the goals set by delivering sudden swift strikes, a combination of defense and offensive, the assault on the fortress.

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stay. Significant changes in military strategy took place in the 10th-17th centuries. in connection with the formation of centralized states. A particularly steep revolutionary leap in strategy occurred in connection with the creation and widespread use of firearms, which not only decisively influenced the conduct of the war, but also the entire system of military-political relations between states. In the military strategy of most Western European countries, the highest achievement of the strategy at that time was considered the capture of enemy territory without decisive battles, the ability to force his army to retreat. In order to counter the maneuver of enemy troops and defend their territory, powerful fortresses were erected. The troops were distributed evenly (along the fortresses and strongholds), covering as far as possible all directions. Such a strategy was called the cordon strategy. The English military theorist G. Lloyd (1720-1780), who was called the "father of the science of strategy", believed that its main content should be access to the enemy's communications, and the immediate task was to threaten his material base (shops). A follower of Lloyd, the Prussian military theorist A. Bülow (1757–1807), reduced all strategy to the science of troop movement and maneuver, and considered achieving victory by "starving out" the enemy as the main method of strategic action. However, in many other states, especially in the east and south of the Euro-Asian continent, including Russia, these principles have not found recognition and practical application. As before, their strategic aims were based on resolute and bold actions, activity, skillful concentration of the main efforts on decisive directions, and a stubborn struggle for the strategic initiative.

In the XVIII - early XX centuries. With the establishment of capitalist relations, the creation of mass armies, the growth of productive forces, the development of science and technology, and the improvement of firearms, the cordon strategy was replaced by the strategy of "crushing" the enemy. It was characterized by a consistent weakening of the enemy with his decisive defeat in a pitched battle.

Generalization of the experience of wars at the end of the 18th - beginning of the 20th centuries. contributed to the further formalization of military strategy into a system of knowledge. Numerous military-theoretical works appeared, including the works of prominent military theorists of the West — A. Jomini, K. Clausewitz, in Russia — N. V. Medem and P. A. Yakovlev. Clausewitz in his work "On War" brought out a provision on the connection between war and politics. Using F. Hegel's dialectical method, he worked out a provision on the relationship between defense and offensive and formulated some strategic principles of warfare. Having based his research on the experience of the Napoleonic wars, Clausewitz saw the tasks of strategy in organizing a general battle, for which he recommended concentrating all forces and means.

The theory of military strategy received significant development in the second half of the 20th century. The construction of railroads, the invention of fundamentally new means - telephone and telegraph, the replacement of the sailing fleet by steam, the introduction of rapid-fire rifled weapons expanded the possibilities of strategy, increased the scope of operations. All this was reflected in military practice and received appropriate coverage in a number of scientific papers. H. Moltke the Elder, in particular, continuing to adhere to the strategy of a general battle, attached paramount importance to the widespread use of railways to concentrate large masses of troops. The Russian theorist G. A. Leer in his writings continued the study of the special nature of the relationship between military strategy and politics. He has the prerogative in defining a strategic operation as part of a campaign or war.

With the entry of capitalism into the stage of imperialism, new significant changes took place in the nature and content of war and military strategy. Definition

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This was influenced by the policy of the largest world powers, aimed at redistributing the already divided

peace, and participation in the wars of the broad masses of the people.

The creation of large factories and industrial complexes, new industries (engine-building, automotive, chemical, etc.), the growth of mechanical transport, the mechanization of the main production processes made it possible to equip the armed forces in large quantities with a variety of military equipment, including automatic weapons, increased the role of the economic factor in the war. All this led to an increase in the scope and intensity of strategic actions, their further division in space and time, and complicated the command and control of troops and the provision of their actions.

New features of the military strategy of the era of imperialism first appeared in the Spanish-American (1898) and Anglo-Boer (1899-1902) wars. Elements of army, and in the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905) and front-line operations began to emerge in them. Comprehension and generalization of new phenomena in the development of military affairs of this period are reflected in the works of A. Schlieffen (Germany), F. Foch (France), F. Colomb (England), A. Mahan (USA), Russian military theorist N. P. Mikhnevich.

The most striking characteristic features of the military strategy of the leading states were manifested in the first and second world wars. Strategic concepts based on the possibility of achieving victory in a short maneuver war turned out to be untenable. By the end of the first year of the First World War, the coalitions of both sides were forced to switch to conducting strategic defense on continuous positional fronts of great length. This was primarily due to the incomplete consideration by the belligerent states of the new economic possibilities of the coalition and the sharply increased combat power of the armed forces in connection with equipping them with new means of combat, including tanks and aircraft.

All the belligerents were characterized by a centralized unification of military and political leadership, the presence of higher political and strategic bodies for commanding armed struggle. Problems of coalition strategy have taken on an important role: the development of unified plans of action, the creation of a unified command, and the organization of strategic interaction.

During this period, a new form of warfare arose — a prolonged struggle on continuous positional fronts with the need to conduct a number of large-scale operations carried out simultaneously or sequentially on various fronts and theaters of military operations. The strategic defense of the rear received considerable development. Basically, the problem of a tactical breakthrough was solved. But the most important issues of preparing and conducting offensive operations at a great depth failed to be implemented.

The military strategy of pre-revolutionary Russia developed along the same main lines, and yet in a new, special way. At least two fundamental circumstances distinguish its historical path. First, Russia avoided the slave-owning phase of the development of society, and, consequently, the corresponding system of military-strategic views. Second, Russia has gone through a number of periods of centralization and disintegration, fall and revival, national isolation and active external pressure, local and imperial politics. This predetermined the repeated change of its military strategy, its especially complex and multifaceted

character.

In the Second World War, the decisive influence on military strategy was exerted by the further development of productive forces, the deployment on this basis by the leading states of the world of armies of many millions, the emergence of new types of troops using large masses of tanks, aircraft, artillery, and air in military operations.

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landing forces, air defense systems, aircraft carriers and other forces. Of decisive importance, however, was the sharply changed alignment of military and political forces: the participation in the war of the Soviet Union with an authoritarian regime of a socialist orientation and Germany with a totalitarian fascist regime of an openly racist, aggressive nature. The clash of these forces gave the war, and at the same time the strategy of all the warring countries and coalitions, an unprecedented decisive and uncompromising character. At the same time, each of the warring countries adhered to its own strategy. The strategy of fascist Germany and Japan was based on the adventurist theory of blitzkrieg, which provided for a surprise attack without declaring war and defeating the enemy in one short-term campaign. This strategy, however, very soon suffered a complete collapse, in connection with which both Germany and Japan during the war were forced to abandon their original strategic orientations, switch to a strategy of phased actions, and then drag out the war, which, however, with finally failed in the same way.

During the war, the strategy of the USSR, the USA and Great Britain also changed dramatically, but it evolved in a diametrically opposite direction. The strategy of all countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, especially the strategy of the USSR, acquired an ever more decisive, active, offensive character, which was one of the most important reasons for their world-historic victory in World War II.

With the end of this war, the military strategy of all the victorious states for some time developed taking into account the experience gained, the alignment of military-political forces in the world and the further development of traditional means of armed struggle with full mechanization and motorization of armies. In the following years, however, the strategy experienced at least five major revolutionary shifts. In the late 40s and early 50s they were associated with the creation of nuclear weapons, in the 60s with the mass equipping of the armed forces with missiles of various types and purposes, in the 70s with the establishment of the so-called strategic balance between the USSR, USA, the Warsaw Pact and NATO, in the 80s with the advent of high-precision conventional weapons, and finally, in the early 90s, due to a sharp turn in the military-political situation, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the collapse of the USSR, the dismemberment of the united Soviet armed forces, the reorientation of the policy of Eastern European countries and the formation of a number of new independent

states, including the Russian Federation as the legal successor of the USSR. At the same time, every time all military-strategic views, fundamental doctrinal principles, views on the means, forms and methods of warfare were subjected to a complete breakdown.

The last period continues to this day. It is associated with a radical revision of the policy of most states, their military doctrines, all strategic concepts, but not in terms of military-technical, but in terms of

geopolitical motives.

At the latest stage of its history, Russia has seventy years of experience of Soviet power within the USSR, in military matters it relies on the Soviet military doctrine and its corresponding military strategy, on the basis of which the USSR waged the civil and Great Patriotic Wars, participated in many local wars and conflicts.

The period of Soviet power is often seen as a break in the history of Russian military strategy. Actually it is not. In fact, it was a special stage of its development. In fact, the Soviet military strategy was a continuation of the Russian military strategy, only it was based on a fundamentally different ideological and political basis, a different economic and state system, without losing its most important national features.

The Soviet period in the development of the Russian military strategy left a deep imprint on it, its essence, content and forms have changed significantly. This

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was reflected in all areas of defense construction, the development of military thought, and the training of personnel. At least three generations of military leaders grew up, brought up on her ideas. A whole scientific system has developed that has determined the direction of strategic thinking and the nature of the practical activities of all command and control bodies of the armed forces. As a result, a number of new stable traditions were formed, which in many respects retain their strength even now.

Of great importance was the fact that the Soviet military strategy was born in the course of breaking up the old military machine in the fire of revolution and civil war. Throughout its further history, it was completely subordinated to the military policy of the Soviet state and the Communist Party. Its main provisions are: a strictly class approach to all questions of military affairs; unity of political and military leadership, a Marxist-Leninist approach to the analysis of the factors that determine the course and outcome of a war, and taking them into account in strategic planning and directing military operations; the use of contradictions in the camp of the enemy, the utmost decisiveness and uncompromising action; optimal determination of the direction of the main attack and concentration of the main efforts to solve the most important tasks; flexible maneuvering of reserves; rational use of forces and means; the consistent build-up of efforts in selected areas up to the complete defeat of the enemy, the skillful creation and effective use of large reserves have stood the test of time.

A distinctive feature of the Soviet military strategy has always been a rational combination of diverse types, forms and methods of military operations. At the same time, the decisive role was always assigned to the offensive, although it was not absolutized. In all wars, along with the strategic offensive, strategic defense, counter-offensive and withdrawal were also widely used. Partisan actions acquired a large scope.

The pinnacle of the development of Soviet military strategy was the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. In the course of it, fundamentally new forms of strategic actions were found and successfully applied—the operations of groups of fronts. They were carried out in the most important strategic areas, characterized by decisiveness of goals, large spatial scope, dynamism and effectiveness in solving strategic problems. During these years, it was possible to successfully solve such problems as a rapid breakthrough of the tactical, operational and strategic defense of the enemy, the encirclement and destruction of its large groupings, the conduct of joint operations by formations and formations of the Ground Forces, long-range aviation, the Navy and the Air Defense Forces of the country. Military strategy has been enriched by the experience of strategic leadership of massive armed forces, including coalition forces, on fronts of great length.

In the postwar years, Soviet military strategy continued to develop rapidly. At the same time, all the strategic concepts being developed were aimed at confronting the USA and NATO, and in the 70s and China. In a short time, a theory of the strategy of a nuclear missile war was created. In the future, it was constantly refined and improved, taking into account the profound changes that took place in the military-political situation, the state of the armed forces, the technical means of warfare, and the views of potential adversaries. Over time, the multivariance of strategic concepts of unlimited, including preemptive, use of nuclear weapons was replaced by the strategy of its stage-by-stage introduction into operation. This was followed by a strategy of repelling aggression, first by conventional means, followed by a transition at a dangerous stage in the development of the conflict to nuclear war. Finally, the concept of equal readiness for both nuclear,

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conventional war, which was replaced by a strategy of predominant readiness for conventional war in its new forms.

The historiography of the development of Soviet (Russian) military strategy during this period is very extensive: the first theoretical works on Soviet military strategy began to be created immediately after the end of the civil war. Among the pre-war works, the works of M. N. Tukhachevsky “Strategy

national and class, issues of modern strategy", "War as a problem of armed struggle", theoretical works of M. V. Frunze "Unified military doctrine and the Red Army", "Front and rear in the war of the future", "Main military tasks of the moment", a capital study by A. A. Svechin "Strategy", a monograph by B. M. Shaposhnikov "The Brain of the Army". Of great importance were the works of A. V. Golubev, S. N. Krasilnikov, V. K. Triandafillov, E. A. Shilovsky, G. S. Isserson, A. N. Lapchinsky, who revealed the possible nature of a future war and substantiated a new theory - Ryu "deep operations".

During the Great Patriotic War, the greatest contribution to the theory and practice of military strategy was made by outstanding Soviet generals: G. K. Zhukov, A. M. Vasilevsky, I. S. Konev, K. K. Rokossovsky, K. A. Meretskov, L. A. Govorov and many others.

The works of V. D. Sokolovsky, R. Ya. Malinovsky, M. V. Zakharov, S. P. Ivanov, A. A. Grechko and other military leaders and prominent military scientists. Of particular importance were the fundamental studies published at that time: "Military Strategy" (1968), "Modern War" (1978), "Local Wars: History and Modernity" (1975), etc.

With the collapse of the USSR, a qualitatively new stage in the Russian military strategy began. At the same time, within its framework, many of the guidelines of the Soviet military strategy retained their influence and strength in a refined form. The formation of the military strategy of the Russian Federation continues.

NATO expansion, about which politicians have been talking for so long, on March 12, 1999 became a fact. The ambassadors of three Eastern European countries, once part of the same military alliance with Russia, handed over to the US Secretary of State documents on the accession of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to the North Atlantic Alliance. With the admission of new members to NATO, the combat strength of the bloc's European grouping of forces increased by almost 13 divisions, approximately 360,000 military personnel and more than 8,000 units of military equipment were replenished almost entirely of Soviet production, including 3,600 tanks, more than 4,000 armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles, almost 400 combat aircraft. In Europe, the balance of power was once again upset. In the new millennium, this creates many problems for our country.

The bloc's eastward move has been a cold shower for many liberal Russian politicians. With this decision, the United States and its allies dispelled their romantic halo of "fighters against totalitarianism" and appeared as tough pragmatists who do not value their previous verbal promises and want to take maximum advantage of the temporary weakness of yesterday's still formidable adversary. The Alliance has created a unique opportunity to include the strategically important region of Eastern Europe in the zone of its stable geopolitical control. The advance of the bloc to the borders of Russia is an important step towards the establishment of American world hegemony.

The emerging threat, to a certain extent, consolidated the national elite of Russia, which in all other respects was divided by ideological contradictions. The negative attitude towards the advancement of NATO to the East was perhaps the only example of the consent of the leading political forces of the country.

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The war in the Balkans, cynically and brazenly unleashed by NATO in March of the same year against Yugoslavia, the total destruction of not only the military, but also the economic infrastructure of this country, the bombing of one of the most beautiful capitals in Europe - Belgrade in front of the entire world community, is nothing more than, as the final chord of establishing a new world order on the planet. Politicians - the arbiters of the fate of ordinary people, have something to think about.

After the collapse of the USSR and the Soviet Armed Forces in Russia, for several years, military reform and the conversion of the military industry were declared. In fact, under the propaganda noise about both, the military sphere was being destroyed: the military industry was put out of action, the foundations were destroyed and the existing mechanisms for mobilizing the country in the event of a military threat were dismantled, the well-functioning system of manning the armed forces became less and less reliable, the training system was liquidated young people to military service, the levels of combat training and military education in the army and navy decreased, the defensive consciousness of the people was deformed and disoriented. The detrimental consequences of such actions were clearly demonstrated by the events in Chechnya. At the same time, the assertions of Russian fans of Western civilization that the West has a peaceful and friendly attitude towards the reformed Russia turned out to be a myth.

It is important to realize that, taking into account the changed role of Russia in the world, its limited economic opportunities, ensuring the country's military security is achievable only if the right choice of priorities in military construction, in the formation and development of the national military strategy. It should also be emphasized that if Russia does not retain powerful strategic nuclear forces capable of largely leveling the gap in more expensive conventional weapons from the leading countries of the world, all talk about the military security of the state will be pointless: our country will simply be doomed to division into spheres of influence between the world's leading centers.

The military strategy of the Russian Federation is called upon to determine real and effective ways and means of ensuring the military security of Russia as an independent state in relation to its current geopolitical and geostrategic position in the modern world. It should not adapt to the policies of individual parties and movements in power or fighting for it, but to ensure the protection of Russia's true national interests.

When developing it, it is necessary to take into account the profound shifts in the world military-political and strategic

situation, the internal situation in the country, radical changes in the political and economic situation in Russia, its domestic and foreign policy, tasks, structure and state of the armed forces. Proceeding from this, it is necessary to develop fundamentally new views and military-strategic guidelines. But, of course, with all this, it is important to preserve everything positive and progressive that has been accumulated and tested over the long path of developing the theory and practice of pre-revolutionary Russian and post-revolutionary Soviet military strategy.

Chapter first

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOMESTIC MILITARY STRATEGY

The middle position of the lands inhabited by the Eastern Slavs, and then the state they created, initially played a dominant role. It was precisely the fact that it was located in the center of a vast European-Asian region, at the junction of three world civilizations, where the vital interests of many peoples and state formations intersected and clashed, that decisively affected the historical destinies of Russia, predetermined the general direction of its foreign policy, the specifics of socio-economic development, not to mention the fundamental features of the Russian national character. All this, however, as well as some other features of the geopolitical position of Russia, and most importantly, the constantly changing environment, sometimes hostile, sometimes friendly, had an indelible impact on all spheres of life and activity of Russian society, including the military field, in other words, on the goals and content of military policy, military organization and military doctrine, and consequently on military strategy.

Having found itself on the main routes of the great migration of peoples, and then at the boundary of the clash of Western and Eastern civilizations, Russia was constantly subjected to the unceasing onslaught of hostile forces from north and south, west and east. Russian lands have repeatedly become the object of invasions and countless raids, the scene of many bloody wars. Since the beginning of the 10th century, our ancestors had to repel about two hundred and fifty invasions, and over the past five hundred years, Russia has spent a total of more than three hundred years in wars. So, in fierce battles with countless nomadic hordes, Norman, Swedish, Teutonic, Polish-Lithuanian and other conquerors, in the fight against the Tatar-Mongolian hordes surging from the Asian steppes, in tough confrontation and repeatedly repeated military clashes with the Commonwealth, Ottoman empire, and then with the Western European countries, the military power of Russia took shape and took shape.

The entire thousand-year history of Russia is at the same time the history of its unparalleled struggle for the continuation of the Slavic race, for the preservation and establishment of Russian statehood. This struggle took various forms: defensive and offensive wars, repelling enemy invasions and military campaigns, national liberation struggles and military assistance to the neighboring Slavic peoples. Of course, Russia's military activity was far from always limited to the decision only

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defensive tasks. Yes, there were periods when imperial motives and tendencies outweighed the scales of her military policy. And yet, in the entire centuries-old military history of Russia, wars connected with the reflection of aggression or a response to this aggression occupy a dominant place. This circumstance determines many peculiar features of the Russian military strategy in the pre-Soviet era.

period of its development.

And although in most cases the military strategy of Russia fulfilled its historical tasks with honor, there were periods when, due to certain conditions, it found itself in stagnation. Fortunately, Russian military thought and military practice have always found the right paths for their further development. Ultimately, the historical progress of the national military strategy is significant primarily because it was a natural chain of outstanding military successes and great victories of Russian weapons.

1. Military campaigns as the embodiment of the military strategy of the ancient Russian state

By the 1X century. includes the unification of the Eastern Slavs into a single ancient Russian state, the capital of which in 882 was Kyiv. Rapidly strengthening and territorially expanding Kievan Rus by the beginning of the tenth] century. was a huge state. In the north, its borders ran along the shores of Onega and Ladoga lakes, in the south - south of Kiev along the Galich-Korsun-Kursk line, in the west - along the upper reaches of the Dniester, Prut and west of the Bug, and in the east - along the upper reaches of the Volga. The head of the Kievan state, the Grand Duke, was subordinate to the "bright" princes – governors of regions (principalities) and lands.

In their hands, the Kievan princes firmly held the main trade routes, primarily the route "from the Varangians to the Greeks." "Whoever owned Kiev held in his hands the key to the main gates of Russian trade and the key to the defense of the whole country from external attacks," noted in 1909 the well-known military historian Professor A.K. Bayov, who served at that time in the General Staff. - "Hence ... being important in economic and military terms for all the Eastern Slavs, Kyiv was bound to become the center of the political unification of these peoples"! The princes of Kyiv clearly understood this. They sought not only to protect the borders of their state, but also to expand their own possessions. It was then that Rus' had to face the Pechenegs and Byzantium in the south, the Volga Bulgaria in the east, and the Khazar Khaganate in the southeast?

The liberation of the Polans, Northerners, Radimichi and Vyatichi from the Khazars, the struggle to retain the East Slavic territories - Galician, Volyn and Drevlyansk, as well as the inclusion of the Tivertsy and Uglichs into Kievan Rus, exacerbated the problem, which, according to the historian B.D. Grekov, was "the most vital and necessary, equivalent to the question of whether or not to be the Kiev state"?.

During this period, the main embodiment of military strategy was military campaigns, or rather, a whole system

interrelated campaigns undertaken in the most important areas with different goals. Following one after another, they were usually based on a common political plan and a single strategic plan, and the whole calculation was based, as a rule, on the consistent defeat of the enemy. Since the military danger then arose either in the south, then in the north, then in the west, or even in the east, the first blow was most often delivered against the main enemy, but often, in order to protect his rear, he aimed at a weaker enemy.

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The choice of one or another direction of military efforts was conditioned by economic and political considerations, the nature and degree of the military threat, and, of course, the prevailing situation. Most often, campaigns were undertaken to establish control over the most important trade routes, subdue weaker tribes with subsequent enforcement of the payment of "tribute", disruption of impending strikes or repulse an attack that had already begun.

The first Kyiv princes Rurik, Oleg and Igor in [X-X centuries. made a number of major military campaigns against Byzantium. At first, these were campaigns in the Byzantine possessions on the Black Sea coast, and then in 860, 907 and 941. directly to the capital of Byzantium Tsargrad. In 880, 909-910 and 913-914. Several military expeditions were undertaken to the Lower Volga, Persia and Transcaucasia. At the same time, Kievan Rus had to wage a series of defensive wars against neighboring states in the west and northwest.

There is no doubt that in order to carry out such large military campaigns, which sometimes lasted months, or even years, when the soldiers had to overcome distances of hundreds and thousands of kilometers, the Kiev princes could not do without a large and strong army. As B. D. Grekov rightly notes, "for a primitive state, such as Kiev, as well as for other European states of the same type, the main means of resolving the tasks facing it was war. Consequently, the issue of organizing military forces was also the most important.

The military forces of the Kyiv state in [X-X centuries. consisted of squads, militia and mercenary units. The squad was the permanent core of the armed forces of Rus', at the same time, she took a direct part in all the affairs of the Kiev prince, both political and military. The composition of the grand ducal squad was heterogeneous, it was divided into two categories - the senior squad and the junior squad. The senior squad included local princes and boyars, who had their own military detachments. The younger squad is ordinary soldiers ("children", "lads", "gridni"). Recruited from free people, they constituted the main force. The princely and boyar squads were relatively few in number. Therefore, during large campaigns, the princes had to gather a militia from the rural and urban people. Militia warriors - "voi" - went on a campaign with their weapons and, depending on their financial situation, carried out horse or foot service.

When a big campaign was coming, the princes of Kyiv resorted to hiring military detachments, most often Turkic ones. In the annals, the Pechenegs, Torks, Berendeys and other Turkic peoples are sometimes called by one general term "black hoods"?. The military detachments of the nomads were cavalry, acted swiftly, and their bold strikes were sudden for the enemy.

The fact that Ancient Rus' had significant military forces is evidenced by the number of princely and boyar squads, militia and mercenaries. In exceptional cases, it reached 40-50 thousand people. In ordinary campaigns, the army of the prince did not exceed 15-20 thousand. Most often, the Kyiv princes solved many of their tasks only with the help of their own squads. The main branch of the army was the infantry, which, depending on the weapons, was divided into heavy and light. Although starting from the tenth century. the role of the cavalry increases significantly, the infantry still remains the queen of the battlefields. Archers were an independent part of the army. They were usually located in front of their troops and in the intervals of the battle line.

During the organization, and even more so in the campaign itself, common features characteristic of the military strategy of that period were clearly manifested. And yet, each Kiev prince, be it Oleg, Svyatoslav, Vladimir, Yaroslav, Vladimir Monomakh, brought something of his own, new to the military strategy. Outstanding military figures of that time

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They were distinguished by careful preparation of the campaign, great attention to the reconnaissance of the enemy troops, the choice of the direction of the strike or the object of the campaign, actions coordinated with the allies, and last but not least, surprise.

Thus, in 860 a fleet of 200-300 boats suddenly appeared at the walls of Constantinople. According to an eyewitness of the events, the Greek Patriarch Photius, the attack on the Byzantine capital was brilliantly organized, "unexpectedly and unnoticed" by the Byzantines. The campaign was undertaken at a time when Emperor Michael III with his troops repulsed the attack of the Arabs in the south. "An unexpected and unnoticed enemy swept over our borders so menacingly and so quickly, like a wave of the sea, and destroyed the inhabitants of this land, like a wild beast, grass, or reed, or harvest"?

Both in this and in all subsequent campaigns, the Kyiv princes paid great attention to the collection of military data about the enemy. "Kievan Rus," wrote V. O. Klyuchevsky, "not only knew the sea route to Constantinople well, but also knew how to obtain timely information about the affairs of Byzantium, the Greeks themselves marveled at the unexpectedness and speed of the attack." The priority role in the collection of intelligence was played by Russian merchants, and in addition to them, special ambassadors and representatives. It was they who supplied Kyiv with a variety of information about neighboring states, including military information.

The characteristic features of the military strategy of that time were surprise actions, the desire to beat the enemy in parts, the coordinated use of infantry and fleet forces, but previously created

favorable military and political environment. In this regard, the campaign of the Kyiv prince Oleg (879-912) against Constantinople, undertaken by him in 906-907, is indicative. Judging by the chronicle, the combined forces of all the Slavic tribes that were part of the ancient Russian state took part in this campaign. The squads of the Ilmen Slovenes, Krivichi, Drevlyans, Radimichi, Polyana, Severyans, Vyatichi, Chud and Merya made up a fairly large army. They were joined by the allies of the Kyiv prince - Croats, Dulebs and Tivertsy. This required a good organization of supply and skillful command and control of the army.

The rook flotilla with infantry moved along the Dnieper, and then along the western bank of Pontus Euxinus to Constantinople itself. The cavalry traveled independently. The campaign was carried out with the maximum swiftness for that time, which ensured its success. Approaching Tsargrad, the infantry landed on the shore. "When Oleg went out on the shore, and fought naked and did a lot of murder near the city of sins and smashed a lot of money, and burned and otherwise did a lot of Rus to the Greeks, but to create military ones," says the chronicle. churches ...

And here is what, referring to the opinion of Konstantin Porphyrogenitus, the outstanding Russian historian N.M. Karamzin writes about this campaign: with the Empire... The Dnieper was covered with two thousand light ships; each had forty warriors; the cavalry marched along the shore... It was necessary to defeat not only the enemies, but also nature with such extraordinary efforts that could frighten the most daring enterprise of our time and seem hardly probable. The nomads dared to pass through the Dnieper rapids with two hundred ships ... The Russians in this voyage ... threw themselves into the water, looking for a smooth bottom and escorted the ships between the stones; but in some places they dragged their boats to the bank of the river, dragged along the bank or carried them on their shoulders, being at the same time ready to repel the enemy. Courageous Oleg finally approached the Greek capital. The Greeks... sat in Constantinople and looked at the horrors of devastation around the capital; but the prince of Russia caused the city itself to tremble ... Oleg put his ships on wheels and, by the power of one wind, on loose sails, went by dry route with the fleet to Constantinople ... The Greeks, frightened by this intention, hurried to offer Oleg peace and tribute". Byzantine emperor for the sake of saving his capital

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tsy not only paid a large indemnity, but also secured an oath with Russia on very favorable terms for the latter.

After the death of Oleg, Igor (912-945) became the Prince of Kyiv. Continuing to unite the lands of the Eastern Slavs under his rule, at the same time he strengthened the international relations of Rus'. In 912-913. Russ made a long trip to the Caspian and Transcaucasia. Eastern sources report that a Rus flotilla of five hundred boats descended along the Dnieper into the Black Sea and, skirting the coast of Crimea, reached the Kerch Strait. Then the Russians went up the Don up to the bend of the river. Here they dragged their ships to the Volga and, going downstream, entered the Caspian Sea. "Russian ships spread across this sea, their crowds rushed to Jil, Dailen, to the cities of Tabaristan, to Abaakum, which was located on the Dzhurjan coast ... and reached the oil shores in the region of Sharvan, known as Baku"!? Military attacks by the Rus on countries in the Caspian basin continued for several months. In military-strategic terms, these were more likely naval campaigns, during which naval battles also took place.

When the Rus with rich booty returned home, they were attacked by the Khazars near Itil, the capital of the Khazar Khaganate. The Russians got out of the rooks onto land. The battle went on for three days. The last word was left to the Khazar cavalry, with which the Russians on foot could not cope. The campaign showed that while the Khazars are strong, the Volga Rus cannot be seen. It would not be a mistake to assume that the experience of this campaign, and it can be called, judging by the scale, strategic, was subsequently taken into account by Prince Svyatoslav.

Prince Igor, continuing the military policy of his predecessor in relation to Byzantium, twice undertook military campaigns against it. The campaign of 941 turned out to be completely unsuccessful: Igor was defeated. His rook fleet suffered heavy losses from the "Greek fire". "And let the fire begin with pipes on the Russian boat, and be able to see a terrible miracle!" The second campaign against Byzantium was undertaken three years later. When organizing it, Igor took into account both his own sad experience (rooks with small forces), and the experience of Oleg's successful combined campaign, which used both rooks and horses. Igor decided to oppose the Byzantine cavalry with his cavalry. Having gathered significant forces, he, like Oleg, carried out a combined campaign. While foot soldiers on ships were sailing along the river, a strong cavalry was advancing along the shore. The Byzantine emperor Roman, having received the news that the Rus were going against him, and, apparently, having little hope for "Greek fire and cavalry, sent his representatives for peace negotiations. The terms proposed by the Byzantines were accepted by the prince of Kyiv. Igor, having concluded a peace treaty, returned to Kyiv.

The military strategy of Ancient Rus reached its peak under Igor's son, Svyatoslav (957-972). He persistently continued the policy of his predecessors, striving to increase the territory of the state, protect its borders, secure the Volga trade route and take over the entire great trade route "from the Varangians to the Greeks", which contributed to the further growth and strengthening of the ancient Russian state. ".

Svyatoslav deployed his military activities in a vast area - from the Volga to the Danube. His first campaign against the Oka and the Volga, undertaken in 964, was caused by the need to include the Vyatichi in Kievan Rus. The fact is that they continued to pay tribute to the Khazars, and this was the main enemy of the Kyiv princes on the eastern borders. Already in the next year, 965, Svyatoslav moved to the Volga in order to finally solve the Khazar problem. The Khazar Khaganate, the eastern neighbor of Kievan Rus, blocked the path of the Slavs not only along the Volga to the Caspian Sea, but also in

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Asia. But that's not all. The main thing is that the Khazars often raided Russian lands.

Svyatoslav struck the first blow in the northeast. As a result, the Volgokamsk Bulgars and Burtases (Mordvaans) were defeated. The subjugation of the Bulgars and Mordovian tribes opened the way to the Volga, which contributed to the deployment of more successful operations against the troops of the Khazar Khaganate. Heading further down the Volga, Svyatoslav defeated the Khazars in a major battle, took and destroyed their capital Itil, and then advanced to the North Caucasus, where he defeated the Yases and Kasogs (Ossetians and Circassians), captured the coast of the Sea of Azov, left in Tmutarakan (former the Greek city of Tamatarhi) part of the squad, thus laying the foundation for the Russian Tmutarakan principality.

Even today, Svyatoslav's campaigns amaze with their grandiosity, and even more so with their organization. 3 thousand km by land and 1.5 thousand km by water were covered in 7-8 months. This is undoubted evidence of Svyatoslav's military talent. His eastern campaign was of great political and strategic importance. Having defeated the Khazars and Bulgars, he, on the one hand, secured the Russian lands from attack from the east, and on the other hand, he secured freedom of action in campaigns against Byzantium.

Strategically, the method of waging war with the Khazars and other eastern nomads was determined by the traditional battle cry of Svyatoslav: "I want to go to you!"⁵. In announcing his own intentions, the prince of Kiev essentially sought to intimidate the enemy, let him feel his superiority, and, as a result, seize the strategic initiative. This battle cry reflected the principle of a commander confident in his abilities: to force the enemy to concentrate troops, so that later they could be defeated in one battle.

After the campaigns that secured the eastern borders of the Kievan state, Svyatoslav rushes south - to Danube Bulgaria. Here, according to the historian V. V. Mavrodin, "he strives to create a mighty Slavic Russian-Bulgarian state"! The campaign on the Danube was of great political, economic and military importance for the ancient Russian state. Having captured the Balkans, Svyatoslav created a springboard for a land attack on the main enemy - Byzantium.

In its preparation and implementation, the campaign in Bulgaria differed significantly from the previous campaigns of the Kievan princes. This time Svyatoslav abandoned the strategy that had brought him success in the east. He does not send his messenger to the Bulgarians with the usual warning "I want to go to you." Now Svyatoslav adheres to a different principle - to achieve surprise. That is why the preparation for the campaign is carried out secretly. A huge army for that time, which included the allied detachments of the Hungarians and the Pechenegs, had the task of inflicting a sudden and crushing blow on the enemy. Seeking surprise, Svyatoslav changed the route of the campaign. He refuses the rook fleet. For the first time in many years, the Russians moved to the Balkans by land, crossing the Bug and the Dniester, to the Danube. Thus, a path was chosen from which the Bulgarians did not expect an attack. The enemy learned about the impending threat when Svyatoslav appeared already off the coast of Istra.

All this is evidence that both the combat challenge "I want to go to you" and the opposite surprise attack were used by Svyatoslav, taking into account the specific situation, an assessment of his own forces and the forces of the enemy. The actions of Svyatoslav in organizing campaigns were also ambiguous. If he did not take wagons on the eastern campaign, then, following with a large army to Bulgaria, the prince had special "wagon detachments" !. The careful organization of the campaign against the Bulgarians allowed him to achieve victory. On the banks of the Danube, Svyatoslav defeated the 30,000th Bulgarian army, which predetermined the outcome of the first year of the campaign. Soon Svyatoslav conquered almost all of Eastern Bulgaria. Having settled in Pereyaslavets, he decided to

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Scheme D. Campaigns of the Kyiv princes in the 10th century.

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should implement the plan - to create a huge Slavic power with its capital in this city. But unexpected events forced the prince to temporarily abandon his intentions on the Danube. The Pechenegs, taking advantage of the absence of Svyatoslav and his squad, attacked Kyiv. He hastily left Bulgaria. But here the Byzantines were seriously alarmed by the advance of the Kyiv prince into the Balkans. That is why they began to implement a whole series of measures aimed at strengthening their positions in Bulgaria and driving out the rest of the Russian army.

The second campaign of Svyatoslav to the Balkans dates back to 971-972. He was sent against the Byzantine army, which was led by Emperor John Tzimiskes. Svyatoslav, having left Kyiv, did not give up hope of gaining a foothold in Bulgaria, but Byzantium also attracted him. Meanwhile, Tzimiskes sent an army to the border regions of Bulgaria. There were several battles, the most important - at Dorostol. Having much fewer forces available than the Byzantines, Svyatoslav had to choose a defensive plan. He dispersed the detachments in different places. Assessing this, Tzimiskes began intense hostilities. Svyatoslav decided to give battle to Tzimiskes, relying on the fortress of Dorostol. On April 26, the first battle took place. Over the next three months, the siege of Dorostol continued. Svyatoslav used active defense. The Russian army, surrounded in the fortress, did not give rest to the enemy with its daily sorties. During this time, Russians clashed with the Byzantines more than once.

On July 24, the last battle took place. Superiority in forces and means was on the side of the Byzantines. Realizing this, before the start of the battle, Svyatoslav turned to his wars with the following words: "... let us not shame the Russian land, but let us lie down with the bones of the dead, for shame is not imam, if we die, shame imam, nor imam run away, but we will become strong, az but I will go before you: if my head lies down, then I will be by myself, "and deciding howling:" where is your head, we will lay down our heads too "? °. The battle near Dorostol ended unsuccessfully for the Russians. Svyatoslav had to make peace with the Byzantine emperor, under which the Russian army left Bulgaria, refusing further conquests.

Nevertheless, this campaign of Svyatoslav, just like the campaigns of his predecessors, is explained by the importance of the military-political goals that the Rus pursued in the Volga and the North Caucasus, in the Black Sea basin and in the Balkans. The desire of Kievan Rus to ensure security on all external frontiers should, in turn, contribute to the strengthening of its power. Svyatoslav clearly traces a certain sequence in the solution of strategic tasks. At first, he directs his main attack to the east and southeast, and, having achieved stability there, transfers his main efforts to the west. The ultimate goal for him is the conquest of Byzantium, this very powerful owner of the key from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. But in order to achieve such a goal, Svyatoslav had to first solve an intermediate task - to establish himself in Bulgaria.

Svyatoslav spent all his campaigns very energetically. Even forced by circumstances to go on the defensive, he leads it extremely actively. The prince sought first to defeat the enemy, and then to take cities and occupy territories. Campaigns were conducted resolutely; to find and defeat the main forces of the enemy was the main task of the Russian army. At the same time, Svyatoslav's strategy was not without flaws. First of all, they include insufficient support for their operational direction, as a result of which the enemy was able to cut off Svyatoslav's army from the metropolis.

The son of Svyatoslav, Vladimir (980-1015), also fought a lot, but more than his father, he paid attention to the development of the internal territories of his expanded state. Many military campaigns of Vladimir, carried out in order to strengthen

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personal power within the state, or to expand the borders or protect them from the attacks of numerous opponents, put it on a par with the skillful commanders of Ancient Rus'. While at war with Poland (campaign of 981), he annexed to Rus' the western outskirts of the East Slavic lands (Chervonnaya Rus). Having defeated the Yotvingians, Prince Vladimir made a significant advance towards the Baltic Sea. Vladimir's campaigns against the Croats, Radimichi, Vyatichi, Kama Bulgarians and Byzantium were also successful.

'One of the most important strategic problems of the ancient Russian state was the organization of the defense of its possessions. At that time, the situation in the south of Rus' remained especially difficult and tense. The nomads, primarily the Pechenegs, were a constant threat from the south to the Russian princes. Chronicles note that during the reign of Vladimir there were eight major wars with the Pechenegs, and all with the aim of strengthening the southern border. Along the rivers Desna, Oster, Trubezh, Sukha and Stuchka, new barriers were built and the old ones were restored. To monitor the nomads, burial mounds were built and a guard service was organized. In important directions, guard mounds were connected by earthen ramparts and a palisade. Thus, for the first time, a fortified line was created, which was of strategic importance for protecting the ancient Russian state from nomadic raids. However, purely defensive measures did not ensure complete security of the borders from attacks by militant neighbors. Therefore, the princes used against the Pechenegs not only defense, but also campaigns. Nevertheless, it can be argued that it was then that the initial forms of active strategic defense began to emerge.

In the second half X| V., i.e., soon after the death of Vladimir's son Yaroslav the Wise, the collapse began

Kyiv state, accompanied by continuous internecine clashes, wars with Poland and the Pechenegs. As a result, a number of independent entities emerged. For the most part, local princely dynasties were established there. Attempts to prevent the collapse of the state did not have positive results. Russian princes most often rallied only external danger. Now it was advancing from the direction of the Polovtsians. A new enemy, quite strong, first appeared in Rus' in 1054 near Pereyasavl. From that time until 1210, the Polovtsy made 46 major raids: 19 - to Pereyaslav land, 4 - to Kiev, 7 - to Severskaya, 12 - to Porose, 4 - to Ryazan.

In the fight against the Polovtsians, the military strategy of Rus' also changed. She repeatedly responded to the blows of the Polovtsians with offensive campaigns deep into the Polovtsian steppes. Among the Russian princes who waged a successful struggle against the Polovtsy, Vladimir Monomakh (1113-1125), a talented statesman and a major commander, stands out in particular. Having become the prince of Kyiv, Vladimir Monomakh made the last attempt to unite the Russian lands around a single center - Kyiv. Although all his hopes were not destined to come true, the temporary restoration of some semblance of former political relations gave Monomakh significant military forces to fight against the external enemies of Rus'???. Even the very organization of joint campaigns of the princely squads, engulfed in internecine struggle, required exceptional efforts. And with this strategic task, on the solution of which the outcome of the struggle against the Polovtsy largely depended, Vladimir Monomakh coped brilliantly. During his more than fifty years of life, he made many military campaigns. In the "Instruction" left by Monomakh to the children, he himself summed up his military activities: "All my campaigns were eighty and three great ones, but I won't remember any other unimportant ones"??3.

The strategy of Vladimir Monomakh was aimed at striking at the Polovtsy in their own steppes. In the conditions of the fragmentation of the state, the struggle has so far been reduced to passive defense. Rus' did not have the opportunity to prevent raids,

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and the princes did not manage to overtake the Polovtsians during the persecution. The only thing that sometimes gave positive results was access to the Polovtsian retreat routes in order to recapture the prisoners. But there is no need to talk about any decisive forms of struggle, since this concerned groups of nomads that were insignificant in number. The new strategy was successfully applied by Vladimir Monomakh in 1103 and 1111. His merit as a commander lies in changing the strategic forms of struggle. This was expressed in the transition from passive defense to offensive actions, in other words, to the transfer of the war into the depths of the Polovtsian steppes. Vladimir Monomakh wrested the initiative and all the advantages associated with it from the hands of the enemy.

A significant contribution of Vladimir Monomakh to the strategy was the change in the time (terms) of campaigns. He introduced into military practice the rule to start a campaign in early spring, when there was still snow, and the horses of the Polovtsy, after the winter starvation, were not able to make long transitions, and the Polovtsians, therefore, act swiftly. Monomakh, just like Svyatoslav, achieved high rates of movement in campaigns. So, in 1111, the Russian army traveled over 500 km in just 22 days. So that they could quickly maneuver, Monomakh put the infantry on sleds. Vladimir Monomakh clearly understood the role of each type of troops and the importance of their interaction. After all, a foot army without a strong cavalry was not suitable for a swift breakthrough, and even more so for the fight against the steppe riders. It was then that Rus' began to use light cavalry. The practical results of the new strategy of Vladimir Monomakh were rightfully appreciated by posterity. "The power of the Polovtsy was undoubtedly broken... The steppe was no longer the same thunderstorm," wrote B. D. Grekov?

In the course of numerous wars and military campaigns waged by the ancient Russian state, the most important principles of the national military strategy were formed, shaped and developed. It is also true that wars often had an aggressive character, for they were undertaken with the aim of expanding and strengthening the ancient Russian state, and many campaigns against nomads pursued purely defensive goals. And yet, the desire to seize the strategic initiative is inherent in many commanders of Ancient Rus'.

Military campaigns were conducted with decisive goals, and their outcome was determined in the course of one battle. Finding and defeating the main enemy forces was the main task of the Rus troops. At the same time, the principle of surprise was widely used as a strategic factor. Old Russian commanders paid great attention to creating a moral superiority of forces and developing unity of action. The preparation and political support of the war, the skillful organization of campaigns, the command and control of the united forces - all this testifies to the high level of the military strategy of the ancient Russian state.

2. The solution of military-strategic tasks in the period of fragmentation of Rus'

By the middle of the KhPI century. the process of political, economic and military disintegration sharply intensified in the ancient Russian state. New centers developed - Suzdal, Rostov, Vladimir and others, which sought to get out of the power of Kyiv. The once mighty state, which had a vast territory, broke up into a number of independent principalities and lands. The process of political fragmentation of the state was intensified due to the existing order of succession of principalities. They turned into inheritances. Subsequently, the new semi-state formations were fragmented into dozens of small estates. So, in Vladimirsko-Suz alone

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distant land in the 11th] century. there were more than a hundred specific principalities?. The power of the Grand Duke becomes purely nominal.

With the change in the political structure of the ancient Russian state, the nature of its armed organization also changed. Each principality had its own armed forces, which, despite local peculiarities,

had common features. The standing core of the armed organization still remained the princely retinue. True, it turned into a princely "court", into a detachment of armed servants. Such squads were the support of the princes in their separatist policy. However, the princely squads were relatively small. Usually they numbered several hundred soldiers, and therefore could not resist the external expansion.

The other half were detachments of specific princes and boyars-landowners - "votchinniks". For permanent or temporary use of land holdings, the prince obliged them to perform military service, and at their own expense, and in case of military necessity, to come with an armed detachment. True, this was an unreliable part of the army, since the "patrimonials" had the right to "departure", i.e. they could at any time, together with their people, go to any other prince. At the moment of greatest danger, the princes recruited militias, who made up the foot army. In some principalities in wartime, the militia reached 10-30 thousand people. So, at the beginning of the XIII century. Vladimir-Suzdal princes sent a 20,000-strong army against the German knights to the Baltics, and Novgorod the Great sent a 15-20,000-strong militia*.

Together, the Russian principalities had significant military forces to repel any aggression. But the trouble is that there was no unity in organization and armament, there was no single command, which means that there was no unity of action. All issues of strategy were decided on the advice of princes and governors. But even the decisions made there were not binding on everyone. Many princes acted on their own discretion.

The period of fragmentation of Rus' is full of internal wars and princely strife. For 234 years (from 1228 to 1462) in the annals there are 90 reports of internecine wars, and in 35 cases it is said about the capture of their own cities? The political decentralization of Rus' led to the fact that its military forces were divided. After all, each principality now represented an independent military organism. Of course, this weakened the military power of Rus', and most importantly, it made it difficult to fulfill the strategic task of fighting against the numerous external enemies of the Russian people. In this difficult period for Rus', it was attacked by the Polovtsy, the Swedes, the Poles, and the Hungarians.

The struggle of Rus' with the Polovtsy continued at the turn of the 11th-13th centuries. In 1185, Prince Igor Seversky undertook a campaign against the Polovtsy. He did not differ either in his organization or in the originality of his plan, and besides, he ended in failure. Nevertheless, our compatriots know about him from school, because it is with him that one of the most remarkable works of ancient Russian literature, The Tale of Igor's Campaign, is associated.

The main miscalculation in the military strategy of the Russian princes during this period was the desire to independently solve the problems of protecting the fatherland from external aggression. On the battlefields, as a rule, armed detachments of individual, and in case of special danger, several feudal principalities acted. Even in the Battle of Kulikovo, when the question of the independence of Rus' was being decided on the battlefield, there was no Novgorod boyar army under the banner of Dmitry Donskoy. Moreover, often some Russian princes themselves called the Polovtsians to the Russian land, concluding temporary military-political alliances with them to achieve their own selfish goals. However, external danger more than once forced the princes to join forces to repel

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enemy. In fact, Rus' was the barrier that protected Western Europe from nomads.

The struggle of Rus' with the Polovtsy was of great historical importance. "This almost two-century struggle between Rus' and the Polovtsy," wrote V. O. Klyuchevsky, "has its own significance in European history. While Western Europe undertook an offensive struggle against the Asian East in crusades, when the same movement against the Moors began on the Iberian Peninsula, Rus' covered the left flank of the European offensive with its steppe struggle. But this historical merit cost her dearly: the struggle moved her from her familiar places on the Dnieper and drastically changed the direction of her future life"?9.

During the invasion of the Tatar-Mongolian troops in Rus', the Polovtsy were dispersed. "The Polovtsy were killed by the Tatars, some fled from their face, while others were turned into slavery by them, but very many of those who fled returned to them." Already the first clash between the Russians and the Tatars in 1223 showed that even in the case of a temporary unification of several princes, a unified military strategy had not been worked out. There was no single plan, no single commander. All this led to the defeat of the Russian troops in the battle of the river. Kalka.

In 1236, the Tatar-Mongolian troops, led by Batu (Batu Khan), began a campaign to the West. Within a very short time, Batu conquered Deshtyn-Kipchak, Bulgar, Crimea and the Caucasus to Derbent. In 1237, he invaded the borders of Rus', conquered the Russian principalities lying in his path. The Vladimir-Suzdal army led by Yuri Vsevolodovich was defeated on the river. City March 4, 1238 During the second campaign (1230-1240), Batu took Kyiv (1240) and other southern Russian cities. Having devastated Rus', the Tatar-Mongols invaded Poland, Hungary and other western lands. In the summer of 1242, Batu turned back. The result of Batu's campaigns in Eastern Europe was the conquest of vast territories, the conquest of Rus' and the formation of a large state - the Golden Horde. After the death of Genghis Khan, the conquered Russian lands came under the control of the Golden Horde Khan.

Thus, for the first time in several centuries after the invasion of the Huns, the Tatar-Mongolian troops brought to the world the total destruction of entire peoples and their cultures. In this regard, the Mongol invasion left far behind all the troubles associated with internecine strife and Polovtsian raids. During the campaigns of Batu, the invaders destroyed entire regions and states for the sake of robbery or momentary revenge. The military doctrine of the Mongols, based on cruel senseless violence, was not distinguished by political wisdom. This ultimately led to the fact that they were not able to use all the results of their victories.

The military superiority of the Tatar-Mongols was a temporary phenomenon. In the course of exhausting large and small wars, even Rus', bloodless and divided into parts, continued to offer heroic resistance to the invaders. Over the years, the Tatars no longer dared to take large-scale actions, preferring to limit themselves to threats, diplomatic pressure or cautious maneuvers. In the vastness of Russia, the offensive impulse of the conquerors has dried up. Her struggle for independence was truly of worldwide significance. "Rus did what neither China, nor the powers of the Khorezmshahs, nor Georgia, nor the Polovtsy could do - Rus' stopped Batu on the threshold of Europe and involuntarily saved European civilization," wrote B. A. Rybakov. But our Fatherland has paid a huge price. The Mongol invasion turned entire regions of Rus' into ashes, it was accompanied by innumerable victims. Almost all of Southern Rus' and part of North-Eastern Rus', once prosperous, have actually become a desert. And here is how the chronicler writes about this: "O the orphan, then our great Russian land became impoverished, and its glory and honor were gone, but not forever, and be enslaved to the Bogomer king ... from Batyiv time" 33.

EARTH

|: Symbols

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Severskaya 1. Galitskaya

Campaigns of the South Russian princes

5. Turovo-Pinsk against the Tatar-Mongols

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Scheme 2. Rus' in the XIII century.

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The Mongol invasion was, according to the same Rybakov, a sad milestone in the history of Russian culture, because it delayed its development for 150-200 years, and at that very moment when the advanced countries of Western Europe began to develop especially rapidly. Although dependent and paying tribute, Rus' had its own princes, i.e. their power, in the Golden Horde the Russian princes were regarded as its vassals. From the khan they received labels for the possession of their principalities. The reasons for this were the fragmentation of Rus' and, as a result, its weakness in military terms.

The difficult internal political position of Rus' - the internecine strife of the specific princes, fragmentation - weakened the strength of resistance to external enemies. From the southeast - the invasion of the Tatar-Mongol hordes, in the northwest, detachments of German, Swedish and Danish knights went on the offensive. Weakened by internecine strife and the invasion of the Tatar-Mongols, Rus' seemed to them an easy prey. In these difficult conditions, the domestic military strategy successfully solved problems of significant scale. The main trends in the development of strategy were best manifested during the struggle of Prince Alexander Nevsky against the German-Swedish knights and Prince Dmitry Donskoy against the Tatar-Mongols.

In 1240 the German knights attempted to capture the important strategic points of Rus' in the northwest—Novgorod and Pskov, while the Swedish knights attempted to capture the mouth of the Neva and the city of Ladoga3°. While in the southern Russian regions of the Tatars the Mongols limited themselves to collecting tribute, the crusaders, having settled in the Baltic states, sought to capture the entire North-Western Rus'. The main organizer of these crusades against the Slavs was the head of the Catholic Church - Pope Innocent [W. He set out to unite the forces of the Order of the Sword, the bishops of Riga and Dorpat, the feudal lords of Sweden and Denmark. At the talks that the Pope led in 1239, it was just about a joint offensive against Rus'. The Swedes, who by that time had captured Finland, were supposed to attack Novgorod from the north, from the Neva River, and the German and Danish knights - through Izborsk and Pskov.

The brunt of the struggle against the German-Swedish invaders had to be borne by the Novgorodians. The army of the Novgorod Republic consisted of the squads of the prince invited to reign in Novgorod, the "front squad", which included mainly boyars with their detachments, and "black people", mainly artisans and peasants, who were called to arms on especially important occasions. In military terms, Novgorod, as the main city of the entire Novgorod land, was subordinate to all other cities, or, as they were called, suburbs.

Since 1236, Alexander, the son of the Grand Duke of Vladimir Yaroslav Vsevolodovich (1220-1265), reigned in Novgorod. Despite his youth, Alexander Yaroslavovich was a skilled politician and an outstanding strategist.

Realizing that the weakened Russian principalities were not in a position to wage an armed struggle on two fronts, Prince Alexander tried to maintain peaceful relations with the Tatar-Mongols. By this, he provided the rear of North-Western Rus' for the difficult struggle against the German-Swedish aggression.

In 1240, the Swedish knights made an attempt to seize the Russian lands. The Swedish army under the command of the son-in-law of the king - J. Birger - together with detachments of Norwegians and Finns on ships entered the Neva and landed at the confluence of the river. Izhora. The Swedish army sought to capture the mouth of the Neva and the city of Ladoga in order to cut off Rus's main route connecting it with the northwestern European states. Having received information about the appearance of the enemy, the Novgorod prince decided to attack him, and suddenly. The task was to defeat the Swedish army, which was much more numerous than the Russian, with one swift blow. The suddenness demanded active action. Prince Alexander made a decision

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step against the Swedes, reinforcing his squad only with Novgorod volunteers and a detachment of Ladoga residents.

On July 15, the Novgorodians suddenly attacked the Swedish army. The attack was so unexpected that Birger's army, taken by surprise, did not have time to build their battle formations and put up organized resistance. The Novgorodians cut down the enemies, and they ran as fast as they could to their ships. Alexander personally "beat many countless Romans, and put a seal on the face of the king himself with a sharp sword," historians noted³⁸. The Swedish army was defeated, three Swedish ships were sunk. For this victory, Alexander Yaroslavovich was named Nevsky by the people.

The victory over the Swedes was of great military and political significance. She clearly showed the possibility of a successful fight against the enemies of Rus'. The Swedes failed to cut off Novgorod from the sea and capture the coast of the Neva and the Gulf of Finland. The Neva victory was also important from a strategic point of view. Having repelled the attack of a strong enemy, who was preparing to strike at Novgorod from the north, the Russian army frustrated the intentions of the Swedish and German troops to act in concert. Now the right flank and rear of the Pskov region of military operations were reliably provided for the fight against the German knights in the Baltic.

The general strategic plan of the crusaders was dealt a sensitive blow. Nevertheless, the German knights launched another offensive in the early autumn of 1240. The German army, which included the knights of the order with their squires, the military forces of bishoprics, vassals of the order and episcopal, as well as "the people of the Danish king", invaded the Pskov land, having its own to capture Izborsk - the key to Pskov, then Pskov itself, and then, having established itself there, proceed to the capture of Novgorod and its lands?

The Germans delivered the first strong blow to Izborsk and after the assault they took it. Well-fortified Pskov was a serious obstacle for the crusaders. Without breaking the resistance of the Pskovians by force of arms, the Germans decided to defeat him by cunning. They entered into negotiations with some prominent citizens. The traitors surrendered Pskov.

With the fall of Pskov, the strategic situation for Novgorod the Great deteriorated sharply: German raids began on its lands. In the winter of 1240/1241. The knights attacked the area of Water (Vodskaya Pyatina), which was adjacent to the Gulf of Finland, and built a fortress in Koporye. Strategically, the construction of the fortress was of great importance for the further deployment of the German offensive against Novgorod. From here, the German knights attacked Tesovo, reached Luga and Saber. Separate German detachments appeared 30 versts from Novgorod.

Returning to Novgorod in 1241, Alexander Nevsky quickly gathers the forces he needs. He strikes the first blow at Koporye, an important strategic point of the Germans. The speed, swiftness and suddenness of the blow led to a brilliant victory. The strongest German fortress in Vodskaya Pyatina was taken and destroyed. Having secured the northwestern borders of Novgorod land as a result of the capture of Koporye, Alexander Nevsky throws his army to the decisive sector - to Pskov - and in the course of a swift assault takes possession of it.

After the loss of Pskov, the crusaders tried to concentrate their forces within the Derpt bishopric. Almost all of his knights gathered here, as the chronicle reports, with the "meister" (master - Ed.) at the head, "with all their biscuns (bishops - Ed.), and with all the multitude of their language, and their power, whatever there is in this country, and with the help of the queen, "that is, there were German knights, the local population and the army of the King of Sweden."

Alexander Nevsky decided not to wait for the enemy, but to transfer military operations to the Baltic occupied by the Germans. Such was the strategic plan of the Russian regiment

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vodka. By that time, the Russian army was fully prepared for delivering a decisive blow. In the historical battle on the ice of Lake Peipsi, which took place on April 5, 1242, the knightly army was surrounded and utterly defeated. With this victory, the great Commander Alexander Nevsky glorified Russian weapons far beyond the borders of Rus'. Thanks to her, the German-Swedish aggression against Northwestern Rus' was stopped.

The Novgorod army defended its land and from another enemy - the Lithuanians. Alexander Nevsky understood that the success of the struggle to a large extent depended on the unification of the forces of Novgorod and the Polotsk principality. He did not forget at the same time about strengthening the southwestern border of the Novgorod land. By his order, fortifications were built there. In 1245, the Novgorod army under the command of Alexander Nevsky defeated the Lithuanian army near Toropets, near Lake Zhiztsa and near Usvyaty on the territory of the Smolensk and Polotsk principalities. These victories ensured the security of the southwestern border of Novgorod land.

Success in the fight against external enemies became possible only thanks to the policy pursued by Alexander Nevsky. It was aimed primarily at uniting the forces of the Russian lands, preventing princely civil strife. The foreign policy pursued by Prince Alexander was based on the correct consideration of the balance of forces and assessment of the situation. The strategy of Alexander Nevsky implied high activity. Strategic goals were achieved with the help of successive strikes, which provided the flanks and rear of the Novgorod army in the next campaign. Thus, the defeat of the Swedes was necessary for a successful fight against the German knights, and the victories over the Germans created the preconditions for the fight against the Lithuanian feudal lords. The skillful choice of the direction of the main attack (first Koporye, then Pskov), the careful preparation of the campaign and its skillful organization, the rapid execution of marches and swift, sudden strikes with all forces are evidence of the strategic art of Alexander Nevsky. The high level of Russian strategy made it possible to achieve decisive goals both in field battles (for example, the Battle of the Ice in 1242) and during the assault on fortresses (Koporye, Pskov, Izborsk in 1241-1242).

The domestic military strategy received its further development during the period of intensification of the struggle of the Russian people for liberation from the Tatar-Mongol yoke. By the XNUMXth century strategy has become almost inseparable from politics. Perhaps it was at this time that their close connection turns into that inextricable chain that remains relevant to this day. The successes of Rus's foreign and domestic policy not only shaped the strategy, but also gave it a new quality, and goals that previously seemed achievable only with the help of military efforts became possible thanks to the art of diplomacy, backed up by the military power of the state.

VX century. large principalities were formed in Rus': Vladimir-Suzdal, Tver, Ryazan, Moscow, etc. Moscow became the collector of Russian lands. Moscow princes, starting with Ivan Kalita, pursued a policy aimed at overcoming the internecine fragmentation of Rus'. For this purpose, they used various means: agreements between princes, the purchase of new estates, the power of the khans of the Golden Horde, and even wars. All this determined the military strategy of Moscow.

"Fully aware that, due to their genealogical position, they would not reach the Grand Duke's table by right, the Moscow princes, using their rich means, realizing the full power of the Tatars' power over Russia, began to please and care for the khan and go to bow to him with rich gifts. Thanks to this, the Moscow prince, according to genealogy, the youngest among other princes, achieved the senior Grand Duke's table: for the execution of the order of the khan - with his troops to punish the Prince of Tver for the uprising - the Moscow prince Ivan Kalita received the Grand Duke's table, which has not since been came out from under the Moscow prince, "-

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noted A. K. Baiov*?. The Moscow principality under Ivan Kalita (1328-1340) not only expanded its borders, but also acquired a new political significance. The power of the Moscow prince significantly increased.

After the death of Ivan Kalita, the Moscow princes Semyon Gordy (1340-1353), Ivan Krasny (1353-1359), but especially Dmitry (1359-1389) continued the struggle for the unification of the Russian lands. Already in the first years of Dmitry's reign, Suzdal and Rostov (Yaroslavsky), Serpukhov and Mozhaisk, Yaroslavl and Uglich, Bryansk and Novosil, Tarusa and Zvenigorod, Murom and Kashin, Dmitrov and Starodub gathered under the banner of Moscow. "You brought all the princes of Russia under your will, and which I did not obey his will, but began to seize on those,"— the chronicler reports about Dmitry.

Prince Dmitry understood that the interests of the struggle against the Tatars urgently required the formation of a single state, moreover, powerful militarily. The unification of military efforts in the face of a dangerous enemy, the coordinated use of allied forces under one command was a characteristic feature of the Russian military strategy of that period. An example is the involvement of the strong Tver principality in the struggle against a common enemy, which became possible thanks to the successful campaign of Dmitry Ivanovich against Tver in 1375.

It should be noted that the prince of Tver was an ally of Lithuania and a supporter of the Khan of the Golden Horde, that is, the main enemies of Rus' at that time. Together with the Moscow prince, all the princes subject to Moscow took part in the campaign. The prince of Tver had to conclude an agreement with Dmitry Ivanovich, which provided for a joint action against the Golden Horde. Thus, Dmitry not only got rid of one of his strongest opponents, but also united basically all the lands of North-Eastern Rus' to fight the Tatar-Mongols.

Consistency in the solution of military-strategic tasks can be traced in the actions of Prince Dmitry and later. The victory over the prince of Tver, and then the death of the Lithuanian prince Olgerd in 1377 and the beginning of the struggle for the princely throne between his sons significantly weakened the power of Lithuania, Moscow's western adversary. This made it possible for Dmitry to concentrate all his efforts on developing a strategy to fight the main enemy of Rus' - the Golden Horde.

Pursuing a policy of unification of the Russian lands, Dmitry closely followed the internal struggle in the Golden Horde. In the 60s - 70s of the XNUMXth century. she, too, was torn apart by civil strife. For 20 years (from 1360 to 1380), that is, before Tokhtamysh came to power in the Golden Horde, 25 khans fought among themselves. This significantly weakened the Golden Horde and made it possible for Dmitry, unlike his predecessors, to pursue a fairly independent policy, to prepare forces for armed struggle against the Tatars. But the Horde was still a strong adversary, and a special strategy was required to fight it. First of all, we had to take care of weapons: these were bows and arrows, swords, spears, long and short axes, flails, not to mention protective equipment - armor. Many cities were engaged in the manufacture of weapons and equipment, even those located on the outskirts of the Moscow principality. This made it possible in an exceptionally short time to equip a huge army with weapons. It was under Prince Dmitry that firearms appeared in Rus' and the production of gunpowder was established. "At this time," report the authors of the essays "From the History of Moscow," published back in 1836, "we introduced firearms.

weapons and saltpetre, and gunpowder, factory was wound up. It is noteworthy that our capital was content with its Russian builders ... foundry workers”⁶.

Along with the manufacture of a large number of weapons and equipment, Dmitry paid great attention to the construction of fortifications in a number of border towns, which later formed a single strategic defensive line. in Moscow in

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In 1367 the stone Kremlin was built. All this significantly strengthened the defense capability of the Moscow principalities.

Prince Dmitry set military-strategic goals based on strict consideration of the political and material capabilities of the Moscow principality, the morale of the Russian people, and the capabilities of his opponent. The entire military system of Rus' has significantly increased. The unification of Russian lands around the Moscow principality, the significant growth of cities contributed to the creation of a large and well-armed army. In turn, the greatly increased army demanded a more perfect organization. The merit of Dmitry is that he brought the organization of the Russian troops into full compliance with the new conditions of the armed struggle. It was he who initiated the creation of organizational forms that fully corresponded to the period of the formation of a single and powerful state, which faced an important strategic task - to get rid of the Mongol yoke.

The Russian army consisted of infantry and cavalry. The strategic importance of the cavalry was well known to Dmitry from the previous history of Rus'. In a relatively short time, he managed to create numerous cavalry squads. The infantry included mainly militias from towns and villages. The entire Russian army was divided into regiments. Dmitry's squad, as under his predecessors, constituted the permanent core of the army. He was especially concerned about its equipment and training. Dmitry made offensive actions the basis of his strategy, knowing full well that victory can only be achieved in a decisive battle by destroying the troops of the Golden Horde.

The Moscow prince paid great attention to strategic intelligence. It was carried out simultaneously in several directions, i.e. against all potential opponents, primarily the Tatar troops of Khan Mamai, the Lithuanian troops of Prince Jagiello and the Ryazan prince Oleg, who joined the opponents of Rus'. Thanks to well-organized intelligence, the Russians knew the intentions and actions of the enemy, which provided their troops with freedom of action. It is also important that Dmitry had the ability to correctly determine the main goal in his actions, and then direct all his efforts and means to achieve it.

The Battle of Kulikovo clearly showed Dmitry's talent as a strategist, nicknamed by the people after this battle Donskoy. Tatar Khan Mamai in 1380 undertook a campaign with the aim of complete subjugation of Rus' to the Golden Horde. To achieve it, he, having gathered a huge army, moved to the borders of the Russian principalities, counting already | September to connect with their allies Jagiello and Oleg on the river. Oka. Dmitry decided to cross the Don and strike at the troops of Mamai, because they posed the greatest threat, and besides, it was necessary to prevent the unification of the Lithuanian and Ryazan forces with Mamai. In a word, the decisive defeat of the main enemy forces corresponded to the main military-strategic goal - liberation from the Mongol yoke. At the same time, this allowed the Moscow prince to keep the initiative in his hands, which made it possible to smash opponents in parts.

Dmitry, who was well acquainted with the strategic and tactical methods of the Tatars, and also confident in his troops, chose for the general battle a terrain that largely contributed to the successful actions of the Russians and, on the contrary, limited the Tatar cavalry in maneuver. The battle order of the Russian army was entirely consistent with the main strategic idea of the commander - to destroy the enemy with a decisive blow.

The Battle of Kulikovo was an example of the classic use of a reserve, in this case an ambush regiment. Introduced at a decisive moment in the direction of the main attack, it largely predetermined the outcome of the battle.

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The active nature of Dmitry's strategy was most fully manifested in the desire to achieve the greatest effect from the battle. Back in 1378 in the battle on the river. Vozha, he completed the victory with a pursuit, which made it possible to destroy the remnants of the defeated enemy troops. In the Battle of Kulikovo, methods of pursuing the enemy were further developed. The Russian army pursued the enemy for about 50 km, as a result, according to the chronicler, “Mamaev's regiments of filthy runaway ... turned their splashes on ulcers, and multiplied their weapons with padash, and the friends in the river were a massacre, and drove them to the river to Swords, and so many of them are destroying, and the friends are mired in the water and drowned ”⁷. In the Middle Ages, there are few examples of such a well-organized persecution and, in the end, achieving such brilliant results.

By the end of the XNUMXth century. Moscow becomes the political, economic and military center of Rus'. Many years of armed struggle against various external opponents, constant princely feuds have shown that only a strong state can ensure the independence of Rus'. The creation of a military alliance of Russian principalities under the leadership of Moscow led to the emergence of military centralization, on which the further development of military strategy largely depended. And it was characterized by a consistent solution of military-strategic tasks, determining the method of waging war depending on the political and military situation (for example, the fight against Tver and Lithuania, the campaign against the Don and the Battle of Kulikovo, the fight against the invasion of Khan Tokhtamysh). The main method of military operations was a strategic offensive, in which caution was combined with speed of action. Defense was used mainly to gain time,

preparation and concentration of the main forces. The direction of the main attack was chosen in such a way as to defeat the main enemy grouping.

3. Features of the development of the military strategy of the Russian centralized state

After the death of Dmitry Donskoy, his son, Vasily Dmitrievich, during his many years of reign (1389-1425) continued the work of his father - he collected lands around Moscow. His policy was also determined by internal political and economic conditions, the need to strengthen the defense, the formation of a Russian centralized state. The process of conquering the specific princes and uniting the Russian lands was completed during the reign of Ivan III (1440-1505). The Grand Duke of Moscow Ivan III in 1462 took the title of "Grand Duke of All Rus'", and in relations with other countries and peoples, he called himself nothing more than a king."

The formation of a centralized state and the strengthening of the grand duke's power met with strong resistance from the local princes and boyars. The center had to wage a stubborn struggle with Novgorod. In 1471 and 1478 campaigns were undertaken, as a result of which Novgorod was included in the Muscovite state. Following him, the Tver and Ryazan principalities lost their independence, and their lands were also annexed to the Moscow principality. By the end of the XVth century. the territory of the Russian centralized state tripled. His lands stretched from the river. Pechora and the Northern Urals to the mouths of the Neva and Narva rivers, from Vasilsursk on the Volga to Lyubech on the Dnieper.

Muscovy in the 16th-17th centuries forced to wage numerous external wars. Neighborhood with the Swedes, Lithuanians, Poles, Tatars put the Russian state in the position of an "armed camp", since it was surrounded on three sides by potential enemies.

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Although Russia was occasionally interrupted by Livonia, Lithuania and Poland (from 1492 to 1595, that is, for 103 years, Rus' was at war with them for about 50 years), then in the southeast there was an exhausting continuous struggle. There was neither peace nor truces here"? Yes, and the Tatars were still constantly attacking the Russian lands.

Wars with Sweden and Livonia were fought for access to the Baltic Sea, which the economy of the Muscovite state badly needed, with Lithuania and Poland - for the liberation of the Russian lands they had captured. In the south and east, there were wars with the Kazan, Astrakhan, Crimean, Siberian khanates and the Nogai Horde that arose after the collapse of the Golden Horde.

Consequently, the foreign policy of the Moscow state was aimed at resolving three problems: the Baltic, Belarusian-Ukrainian and Tatar. And they could only be solved during military campaigns. However, the wars were caused not only by these problems, but also by the desire of the Moscow princes to acquire new territories. All this determined the nature of the military strategy of that period.

In the new political and economic conditions of a growing centralized state, the old military capabilities were clearly not enough. Therefore, one of the main directions of military strategy is to increase the number and strengthen the armed forces. Their reorganization began in the last quarter of the 15th century. and became the main concern of the central government. First of all, the princes of Moscow forbade the departure of service people to other princes, and in addition, they tried to attract landowners from their lands to military service. Another way is the expansion of the Grand Duke's court. The army included all categories of service people of the principality, primarily the former specific princes and their boyars.

In the process of unification of the Russian lands, many princes and boyars with their estates and courts voluntarily transferred to the service of the Moscow prince. From that moment on, they all became his boyars. Serving princes maintained armed detachments. At the first request of the Grand Duke, they were obliged to go on a campaign in person or send their commanders with military men. How many serving princes there were under Ivan III is evidenced by at least the fact that out of 16 governors who participated in the battle of the river. Bucket, || had a princely title. The core of the Moscow prince continued to be the grand ducal court, which consisted of service people, nobles and boyar children who carried out constant military service.

A new form of material support for service people at the end of the 15th century. became landownership. Land was given under the obligatory condition of military service. The landowner had to be at the first request at the appointed time for military service "horse, armed and crowded" "". The so-called local system was born, which was a form of conditional land tenure. It received further development in the 19th century. The formation of a local militia is a major achievement of princely power in the organization of the armed forces. Their number increased significantly, and the military structure of the state was also strengthened.

The second component of the army continued to be the city regiments, recruited from the townspeople. The third part of the army was the "land" army, collected from a certain amount of sokh - a taxable unit.

The armament of Russian soldiers improved qualitatively and became more diverse. The weapons of impact were: spears, sulits, horns, swords, sabers, broadswords, reeds, flails, axes, coinage, shestopery; Throwing weapons were bows and crossbows.

In the second half of the XVth century. to strengthen the armed forces of the country, the creation of artillery - "outfit" was of great importance. In Moscow, under Ivan III, a cannon-casting industry arose. There are references to the arrangement in 1475 of a "cannon hut", which was transformed in 1547 into a cannon foundry'. At the end

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X\ c. the Russian centralized state already had quite strong artillery. Increased martial

The importance of guns was also reflected in the organization of Russian artillery. The "outfit" within the army became an independent unit, and the "outfit" was headed by special governors.

In the second half of the XVIIIth century. the organization of the army received its final arrangement. Each independent army now consisted of three regiments (large, advanced and sentry - the so-called "small category") or five regiments (large, advanced, right hand, left hand, sentry - "large category"). The military strategy of this period is distinguished by the fact that the division of troops into three or five regiments was carried out not only during campaigns and on the battlefield, as it was before, but also at the place of formation. The creation of a local militia, the subordination of the armed detachments of individual service princes and boyars, as well as the field rati, gave the grand dukes the opportunity to have a more or less definite contingent of military people, and therefore, to create established military formations in advance.

At first, the strategic leadership of all the armed forces, both in peacetime and in wartime, was carried out by the Grand Duke personally or by the great governor appointed by him, which ensured the unity of command. In the process of formation of a centralized state, a state apparatus was formed - orders. At the turn of HU-HU! centuries a special military administration arose - the Discharge Order, which played an important role in the development of the armed forces and the development of certain areas of military strategy. In the continuous struggle with external enemies, the Muscovite state developed such a military system and such forms of warfare that fully met its state interests. The general leadership of the troops was carried out by the Discharge Order, which became the highest military body. In accordance with the political task set by the government, a strategic plan was developed in the Discharge Order.

Particular emphasis was placed on preparing for war. The total number of troops needed for the campaign was determined in advance, and in accordance with this, the number of troops from each region. At the same time, the numerical ratio of the branches of the cavalry and infantry troops, as well as the degree of their armament with firearms and edged weapons, was strictly taken into account. Each region was ordered to supply the army with a certain number of horsemen and foot soldiers, as well as a certain number of wagons and food supplies.

In preparation for war, by order of the government, cities located on the territory bordering on the enemy were fortified, or new ones were built, which were to serve as strongholds. So, Ivan III, preparing for the war for the coast of the Baltic Sea, built Ivangorod near Narva in 1492. Vasily Sh, preparing to take Kazan, built Vasilsursk, and Ivan [U] built Sviyazhsk for the same purpose. The strategic plan also took into account the provision of secondary areas. Waging war in the west, it was necessary to be always ready to repel the attack of the Tatars from the east. In order to prevent the constant raids of the Tatars, the Grand Dukes of Moscow ordered the creation of fortified bands - "features" along the defensive lines, as well as the organization of guard and stanitsa service to monitor the advance of the Tatars. It was led by observation detachments - "watchmen" and "villages". The fortified bands stretched for hundreds of kilometers. They consisted of a chain of fortified cities, prisons and prisons, forest fences (blockages), tyn (logs driven into the ground), and in treeless gaps - ditches and ramparts.

The organization of guard and stanitsa service was not limited to defensive measures. As soon as spring came, significant forces were concentrated on the banks of the Oka - up to 35 thousand people. This so-called "coastal service" had as its task to strike at the invading enemy and defeat him, and

if he

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turned out to be stronger, then delay or at least slow down its progress. A complex system of combat observation allowed the troops to concentrate at certain points, and not be located in a cordon, that is, in a line. The entire system of defensive southern border lines was active and distinguished by a clear organization.

The point of collection of the troops was planned in advance, the time and order of the march to the intended object were carefully established. When developing the plan, maps were used. Campaigns were made on land and along rivers. In the struggle, for example, with the Tatars, part of the troops, artillery, ammunition and food were transferred on ships along the rivers Moscow, Klyazma, Oka, Volga. Encamped near the rivers, the troops made fortifications in the form of ditches, ramparts, lines of wagons. Military operations were conducted mainly around fortress cities. Large field battles were rare.

The Russian state repeatedly had to wage wars simultaneously with several opponents. This, of course, required considerable efforts from the central government, troops and commanders. Thanks to a skillfully pursued foreign policy, it was often possible, already in the course of the war, to disable one of the opponents or to provoke a conflict between them. An example is the strategic plan of the war against the Khan of the Great Horde Akhmat, who was promised support by the King of Poland, Casimir [V]. Having received news of Akhmat's invasion (the second campaign in 1480), Ivan III quickly gathered an army and sent it to meet Akhmat. At the same time, on his orders, a strong detachment on ships went down the Volga to attack the Horde uluses (behind enemy lines), and the prince's ally, the Crimean Khan Mengli-Girey, moved against Casimir GU. It would seem that the situation that was favorable for Khan Akhmat suddenly changed dramatically: Casimir was attacked by the Crimean Tatars, and the Russian detachment smashed the uluses of the Great Horde. I stood on the river Ugra for more than a month, Akhmat finally hastily left the position, but, retreating, decided to take revenge on Casimir, devastating part of the Lithuanian lands. "Standing" on the Ugra essentially ended the 240-year Tatar-Mongol yoke. The campaign of 1480 accelerated the final disintegration of the Golden Horde. In 1481, Khan Akhmat was killed, and in 1502 the Golden Horde itself fell under the blows of the Crimean and Tyumen Tatars."

In the meantime, the Russian state faced new military-strategic tasks: the reunification of Russian lands occupied by its neighbors, as well as the reliable provision of the northwestern regions and western

borders. All this could be done only with the help of military operations against Poland, Lithuania and the Livonian Order. In the wars against Western opponents (1480-1503, 1512-1522), the military strategy of the Muscovite state was further developed. In principle, it was a continuation of the policy of "gathering Rus'." The strategic goals of the war were the reconquest of Russian lands captured by the Poles, Lithuanians and Livonians during the period of the Tatar yoke. It was very important to return Smolensk and Chernigov - the ancient Russian cities that served as strongholds of defense on the western border of the country. The strategic importance of Smolensk, as a distant approach to Moscow, was well understood by the Moscow Grand Dukes. But for the state, this city was also of great economic importance. The shortest route to Western Europe passed through Smolensk. It was a junction of trade routes from the Baltic, Poland and the Dnieper region.

Moscow princes have always skillfully used the benefits of the political situation. Thus, Ivan III concluded an alliance with the Moldavian ruler, established friendly relations with the Hungarian king and strengthened the alliance with the Crimean Khan Mengli Giray. At a high level, a strategic plan was developed, according to which the Russians

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and the Tatar troops were to act in close cooperation. Perhaps, for the first time in three hundred years, the Tatars become allies of Moscow not on a tactical, but on a strategic level. This plan was based on the consistent defeat of opponents, primarily Livonia. The campaign undertaken in 1481 ended with the conclusion of a truce, which was signed in 1482.

Having achieved success in the fight against the Livonians, Ivan III began a war with Lithuania. A distinctive feature of the military strategy at that time was that the Russian command transferred military operations to the territory of the enemy. Although the war turned out to be protracted and at its individual stages the Russian troops solved defensive tasks, nevertheless, on the whole, offensive operations prevailed in it. The invasion of the enemy's territory was carried out by several groupings from different directions, which greatly hampered the enemy's resistance. The directions for the actions of the troops were chosen in such a way that the offensive had an enveloping form. The command of the Russian army sought to seize and keep the strategic initiative in their hands.

In XY and the first half of XY! century, when the process of forming a centralized state was taking place, the disturbing external situation turned the country into a kind of military camp. Due to the fact that she was forced to wage almost continuous wars, her military strategy became more complicated.

The increased number of troops, sometimes reaching 100,000 or more, required more perfect strategic leadership. In addition, the Moscow government has always faced the problem of ensuring readiness for war on two or even three directions at the same time. And in the event of a war with one enemy, the possibility of an attack by another was never ruled out, which made it necessary to provide border lines with a sufficient number of troops. Most often, hostilities unfolded around fortresses, which, however, did not exclude large field battles, especially with the Tatars.

In the second half of the XNUMXth century. the main directions of military strategy have not undergone major changes, since

The Russian state faced a difficult task - to assert its international significance. However, the achievement of this continued to be hindered in every possible way by the neighboring states. The eastern border remained practically open. Here, Moscow was constantly threatened by the Kazan Khanate, which, moreover, blocked the Volga trade route for the Russians. And in the southeast, the Astrakhan Khanate closed the way to the Caspian region and Persia. The Crimean Tatars blocked the way to the Black Sea. Western neighbors tried in every possible way to isolate the Muscovite state from Europe. To establish political, economic and cultural ties with Western Europe, access to the Baltic Sea was necessary.

Based on the difficult foreign policy situation, the Russian state sought to consistently solve its pressing problems. Many of them found their resolution in the reign of Ivan the Terrible (1530-1584). In 1549-1556, his main efforts were focused on the fight against the Kazan Khanate. If Smolensk opened the way to the West, then Kazan opened the way to the East. A trip to the Kazan Khanate is one of the links in the struggle against the disintegrated, but still formidable Golden Horde. After successful operations in the east, the main strategic efforts are transferred to the west. In 1558 the Livonian War began, which lasted almost 25 years.

Tasks in the field of foreign and domestic policy, Ivan PU could solve only in the presence of powerful armed forces, the state of which did not correspond to his grandiose plans. He could not do without a radical military reform. Reforms were carried out throughout the reign of Ivan the Terrible. IN

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In the course of them, the entire military system of the state was significantly improved, and the combat effectiveness of the troops was significantly increased.

As for the Kazan campaign, it undoubtedly differed favorably from the previous ones. The strategic plan of military operations correctly determined the direction of the main attack - to Kazan, as the main base of the Tatars, and its skillful implementation led to the elimination of the threat from the east. With accurate intelligence information about the enemy, the troops were concentrated and deployed in full accordance with the real situation and on the basis of the experience of previous military operations. The consistency and perseverance of the Russian command in achieving the planned strategic goals deserve special attention. At regular military councils, the nature of the actions of the troops at each stage of the campaign was determined, forces and means were distributed taking into account all possibilities. Already here one can observe the beginnings of organizing a centralized supply of troops. The organization of the campaign, siege work and the assault on the fortress has noticeably improved, and the role of artillery has increased.

With the conquest of the territory of the Kazan Khanate in 1552 and the annexation of Astrakhan four years later, military tensions on the eastern borders of the Russian state significantly decreased. The trade route along the Volga was finally freed, which made it possible to intensify mutually beneficial economic ties between the Muscovite state and Azerbaijan, Persia and India, Siberia and Central Asia. At the same time, the inclusion of Kazan and Astrakhan into the Russian centralized state created favorable conditions for solving long-standing problems in the West.

The Livonian War is the largest of all the wars waged by Moscow in XU! V. Its conduct required the exertion of all the forces of the state. However, the end justified the means: access to the Baltic Sea was worth it. In turn, on the part of Livonia, Lithuania and Poland, the war was fought to maintain the blockade of Rus' with the support of many Western countries. The Russian state had to fight the Livonian War simultaneously with several opponents and in several directions. Thanks to the skillfully implemented foreign policy, Ivan the Terrible was able to conclude temporary truces with the Polish-Lithuanian government and with Sweden during the war, as well as to conduct skillful negotiations with the German emperor. Although this was only a temporary means, it nevertheless contributed to the achievement of the main goal in the war.

In a strategic sense, the actions of troops in various directions are of particular interest, both against several opponents and against one, for example, the Livonian Order in the first years of the war. Livonia, with its numerous fortified cities, where all the military forces were concentrated, could be crushed only after the capture of these cities. Similar actions were taken by the Polish-Lithuanian and Swedish troops.

By 1570, the foreign policy situation for Rus' deteriorated sharply due to the fact that the Swedish-Danish war ended, which lasted seven years, and Sweden got the opportunity to enter the war with Russia. And the unification of Lithuania and Poland into one single state of the Commonwealth (Unia of Lublin in 1569), of course, also weakened the military-strategic position of Rus'. In addition, the Poles managed to involve Turkey and the Crimean Tatars in the war. In 1571, the Crimean Khan, together with the Turkish Janissaries, made a campaign against Moscow and burned the Moscow suburb.

Military operations in Livonia continued almost continuously. In 1579, Ivan U was again preparing to undertake a decisive campaign in Livonia, but in early August, the Polish king Stefan Batory, violating the truce concluded before, besieged Polotsk with a large army and then took it. In 158] the same Batory brought his

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troops under the walls of Pskov. The siege of the city lasted four and a half months. Its defenders made many sorties. The exceptional stamina of the Russians did not allow Batory, who had almost 100,000 troops, to take the city. While Pskov was under siege, the Swedish troops under the command of J. Delagardie captured Narva, Ivangorod and Yamgorod. In January 1582, Ivan [U managed to conclude

a truce with Batory, however, under the terms of this truce, the Russians had to temporarily abandon Livonia. But the game was worth the candle: now it was possible to concentrate all forces against Sweden. However, soon, despite the armistice, the Polish-Lithuanian government intervened in the war between Russia and Sweden and demanded that the Russian tsar cease hostilities. At the beginning of 1583, Ivan [U] concluded a three-year truce with Sweden.

The 24-year-old Livonian War ended without having solved the task set – to reach the Baltic Sea. True, in the course of it the Livonian Order, the springboard of German aggression in the Baltic states, was destroyed. Such a long war, due to the failures of the last three years, worsened the position of the Russian state on the northwestern and western borders. Hostile neighboring states were well positioned for further and even deeper invasions, which were undertaken at the beginning of the 17th century.

The Muscovite state in the first years of the 17th century experienced one of the most difficult stages in its history — the Time of Troubles. The worst thing is that Polish troops ended up in Moscow. King Sigismund sought to secure a vast territory for Poland along the Toropets-Rzhev-Dmitrov-Moscow-Yaroslavets-Putivl line. The Swedish invaders, taking advantage of the favorable moment, captured Novgorod and advanced on Pskov, Polotsk and Tikhvin.

England did not stand aside either, developing plans to seize the Russian North by force of arms, and then by the Volga route in order to penetrate into the basin of the Caspian Sea. English intelligence agent merchant John Merrick wrote in his report to London: "It is quite well known in what a miserable and distressful situation the people of Muscovy have been for the last eight or nine years ... most of the country adjacent to Poland has been devastated, scorched and occupied by the Poles . The other part from the borders of Sweden has been captured and is being held by the Swedes under the pretext of aid... The north is that part of Russia that is even more separated from the danger of both the Poles and the Swedes, the most profitable for us and the most convenient for trade." In his opinion, "Russia should become a storehouse for England's oriental goods"65.

The internal political situation of the Muscovite state was simply catastrophic. The former state apparatus collapsed. There was no central government, no treasury, no army. There was a desperate struggle for power between the various factions. The threat of complete loss of national independence hung over the Russian state. Under these difficult conditions, the national liberation movement of the Russian people developed. The militia played a significant role in solving military-strategic tasks to liberate their country from the invaders.

Popular armed uprisings showed both the strengths and weaknesses of the liberation movement. The main thing is that moral superiority was on the side of the people, and this was ultimately the key to success. Nevertheless, insufficient organization, the absence of a unified military leadership, and weak weapons did not allow for tangible success. In the course of the struggle against foreign invaders, various sections of the population became more and more convinced of the perniciousness of separatism and the inefficiency of disparate detachments. Nizhny Novgorod became the center of the organization of the people's militia, and Kuzma Minin and Dmitry Pozharsky acted as its leaders.

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The military strategy of Minin and Pozharsky was entirely subordinated to the idea of liberation from the interventionists. Its characteristic features are: the mobilization of the spiritual and material forces of the people, the accumulation of the combat potential of the people's militia, thorough political, material and military preparation for the upcoming hostilities, the development of a strategic plan that provided for peace negotiations with the Swedes to focus the main efforts on the liberation of Moscow, and then defeat the enemy in parts. All this ultimately led to victory and the creation of favorable opportunities for the complete cleansing of the territory of the Russian state from the invaders.

After the liberation of Moscow, military operations on Russian lands continued for several more years, since many Russian cities remained in the hands of the interventionists, including Smolensk from the Poles, Novgorod from the Swedes, who planned to seize all Novgorod lands. After the liberation of Moscow, the people's militia was disbanded.

In 1613, the Zemsky Sobor, which finally met, approved the reign of Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov (1613-1645). His government faced the military-strategic task of great importance - to complete the liberation of the state from foreign invaders and eliminate the consequences of the intervention. First of all, it was necessary to recreate a combat-ready armed forces. As a first step, the number of service nobles and boyar children, who made up the noble militia, was increased. At the same time, due to the growth in the number of urban archers, the streltsy army exceeded the size of the noble militia. By the 30s of the XVI century. the total number of military men was brought up to 100 thousand people, but of them in the regimental service there were at least 20 thousand people who performed border service." In 1630-1632. six soldier (infantry) and Reiter regiments are created. They became the basis of the regiments of the new system.

The strengthening of the Russian state after the successfully completed struggle against intervention allowed the government to take steps towards the return of Russian lands. The struggle aimed at reuniting the Russian lands, as well as reclaiming the territories of Ukraine and Belarus, continued throughout the 17th century. The most important military events of this period were the Russian-Polish wars (1632-1634, 1654-1667), the Russian-Swedish war (1656-1658), the war with Turkey - the Chigirin campaigns (1677-1678).

If at the beginning of the XVII century. Muscovy was forced to take up a strategic defense and repel the invasion in the center of its state, then in the middle of this century the Russian army switched to offensive operations in order to liberate the original Russian lands seized by its neighbors, and also gain access to the Baltic Sea. Due to the fact that the achievement of these goals was vital for the further development of the state, the military strategy acquired an active character.

The Russian army was aimed at delivering a decisive blow to each of the opponents individually. As a result, the Commonwealth was defeated in 1654-1656, and Sweden - in 1656-1657, although the Muscovite state did not have sufficient forces to defeat the united opponents. Nevertheless, the consequences of these wars were important. As a result of the war with Poland, Left-bank Ukraine was finally annexed to Russia.

Of course, the activity and decisiveness in the strategy of the Russian state in the middle and second half of the 17th century. were a reflection of the political and economic strengthening of the state. However, this strategy was not yet sufficiently consistent in achieving the main strategic goal, and the contradictions between opponents were not always correctly used. The weakness of the military strategy of this period is explained by the limited military forces of the state.

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In the course of hostilities, the Russian army has repeatedly shown its readiness to carry out marches over considerable distances while maintaining combat readiness, great mobility for its time, and the ability to shift the main efforts from one direction to another. If the beginning of the war with Poland was preceded by a thorough preparation of the theater of operations and troops, then the Russian army entered the war with Sweden without any preliminary preparation. Despite this, its high combat effectiveness made it possible to transfer troops from the territory of Belarus to the Baltic region, inflict a powerful blow on the Swedish army and, as a result, achieve great territorial successes.

It was in the second half of the 17th century. in military strategy, those characteristic features were born that at the beginning of the next century, Peter comprehensively developed []. In this respect, the connection of times is undeniable. "Bowing before the genius of the great emperor-commander, we, however, are far from thinking that supposedly before him there were no independent principles in Russian military art ... , and did not exclude, replacing them with foreign ones, without any attention to the "Russian battle" developed by centuries of experience, - wrote the military historian of the twentieth century. D. Maslovsky8.

4. Military strategy of the Russian Empire in the 18th century.

Russia at the turn of the 17th-17th centuries was a powerful, rapidly developing state. It was the largest continental power with a population of more than 13 million people, it occupied a vast territory from the headwaters of the Dnieper in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east and from the shores of the Arctic Ocean in the north to the borders of China in the south.

At the same time, a significant part of the original Russian lands captured by Poland, Turkey and Sweden in the 18th century,

were still foreign possessions. Russia was deprived of natural outlets to the shores of the Black and Baltic Seas, which delayed its further development. Especially important for the Russian state was the task of returning access to the Baltic Sea, captured by the Swedes. Sweden tried in every possible way to isolate Russia from the most important maritime trade routes. The Swedish king Gustav-Adolf wrote: "The Neva and Narva can serve as gates for the Swedish territory, which can be easily locked up for the Russians at any time. The Russians are completely cut off from the Baltic Sea, so that they cannot even lower boats into its waves. At the end of the XVI century. Russia also faced a second important task - the struggle for access to the Black Sea. Both of these tasks could be solved only by military means, which affected all aspects of Russia's external and internal

politicians.

The first quarter of the 18th century is inextricably linked with a sharp intensification of Russia's foreign policy and profound transformations in all areas of its social life - in the economy, administrative and political structure, in culture, and especially in military affairs. All state structures underwent radical reform. Prerequisites were created for the transformation of the Russian state into a powerful empire. Gradually, Russia overcame its age-old backwardness from the West. At the same time, the elements of a new, imperial policy and the corresponding elements of military strategy were being formed. The most important role in this belongs to Peter 1 (1689-1725), who from 1721 became the first Russian emperor. His decisive innovations, in the figurative expression of contemporaries, "raised Russia on its hind legs."

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To resolve the new foreign policy tasks facing Russia, Peter carried out profound military reforms, which made it possible to radically reorganize its armed forces. He made many innovations both in military policy and in strategy. New directions in the strategy of Peter [were outlined already during the war with Turkey, which Russia waged in 1695-1700. In the course of it, it was supposed to solve two main strategic tasks: to secure the south of the country from the constant raids of the Crimean Tatars and to go to the Black Sea, on the shores of which the Ottoman Porte dominated. Of the two Azov campaigns (1695 and 1696, the first was unsuccessful. However, the original strategic decision made by the young tsar deserves attention. In all previous campaigns against Turkey, Russian troops, as a rule, advanced through Ukraine, along the Dnieper, in order to go directly into Crimea Unlike his predecessors, Peter renounces the Crimean direction as the main one, and decides first to seize Azov. This plan reflected all the originality of Peter's military strategy, in other words, the ability to take into account the specific conditions of the situation and to balance the put forward strategic tasks with the available funds .

However, it was not possible to take Azov in 1695. The troops, including the command staff, were not yet sufficiently prepared to cope with the siege of the fortress. The complete unsuitability of the existing organization of troops was revealed, as well as the weakness of their recruitment and training. The troops lacked artillery, and its actions were ineffective. In addition, the absence of a fleet did not allow Russia to block the fortress from the sea and from the river. Don. The absence of a unified command of the troops also made itself felt. Nevertheless, the unsuccessful assault on Azov, the large material costs incurred and combat losses among the troops did not discourage Peter [. Moreover, he showed one of the most valuable qualities of a true commander - the ability to comprehensively take into account combat experience, drawing the right conclusions from the mistakes made.

Preparations for the second Azov campaign were carried out strategically much better, they were distinguished by their scale and unprecedented pace for that time. 300 plows, 300 sea boats, 22 galleys and 4 fire ships, 2 large sea ships were laid down." At the same time, the ground forces were strengthened. Their number, compared with the first campaign, doubled and was brought to 70 thousand people. "

The siege of Azov in 1696 was carefully planned and comprehensively organized. The interaction of the infantry and the fleet made it possible to block Azov both from land and from the sea, which deprived the garrison of the fortress of any outside help. But the Cossacks distinguished themselves most of all: having approached the Turkish squadron in boats, they burned it. The success of the siege was assured. On July 19, 1696, the Turkish garrison had to surrender the fortress. The undoubted success of the Russian troops near Azov was due to a well-developed strategic plan, clear joint actions of the army and navy, and the establishment of a single strategic leadership.

Finally, Russia received access to the sea, however, so far only to Azov. However, Azov itself could not become a naval base for gaining dominance on this sea and further actions against the Crimea. Therefore, in 1698, it was decided to build a new fortress near Taganrog - Troitskaya and proceed with the construction of a large fleet. For this, 49 "kumpanstvos" were created. All of them undertook to launch one ship at a time. By 1702, three more fortresses were built on the Taganrog Peninsula: Olenovskaya, Pavlovskaya and Cherepakhinskaya. Every year more and more new warships entered service. The appearance of the Russian fleet in the Sea of Azov forced the Turks to accelerate the conclusion of peace with Russia"?. In a word, although Peter [did not succeed in completely solving the Black Sea problem, the capture of Azov

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and the arrangement of naval bases made it possible to drastically improve the strategic position in southern Russia.

The Azov campaigns were the first serious military school for the Russian Tsar. The experience gained left an imprint on all his subsequent military activities. Most importantly, he realized how important for the success of the war is a carefully thought-out and well-timed preparation of the armed forces and the theater of the upcoming military operations. At the same time, the Azov campaigns clearly convinced him of how backward the military organization of Russia was, how poorly trained archers and local cavalry were in combat, how necessary it was to have a regular army and a strong navy. Such disappointing

conclusions forced Peter II even more decisively to reform the armed forces.

Military reforms had as their main goal the creation of a regular army and navy based on a new system of troop recruitment. By decree of Peter [in 1705, recruitment duty was introduced. And from now on, the state, with the help of recruitment kits from the tax-paying estates of peasants and townspeople, completed the rank and file every year. Recruits were selected at the rate of one person from 20 yards?3. In total from 1705 to 1725. more than 50 such recruitments were carried out, they gave the armed forces almost 400 thousand people.” Recruitment was an advanced system for those times, as it made it possible to have a large standing national army. The established single principle of recruitment became an important link in the creation of a regular army and navy. The recruitment of the command staff was carried out through the legalized compulsory civil service of the nobility. A number of military schools were established to train officers. In general, the new system of staffing the army and navy with soldiers and officers introduced by the tsar made it possible to create armed forces capable of successfully solving major external and internal tasks of the state. The army received a powerful source of replenishment, which had a positive effect on the course of the Northern War (1700-1721).

At the same time, important changes were taking place in the organization and structure of the troops. In the first decade of the tenth century The armed forces of Russia consisted of a field army, garrison troops, land militia and irregular units. Based on the experience of the Northern War in 1711, a staffing table was developed, according to which the field army now had 2 guards, 5 grenadiers, 35 infantry, 33 dragoon and artillery regiments. They were reduced to separate armies, divisions and brigades of non-permanent composition. Garrison troops were stationed in large cities to maintain internal order there. In addition, they performed the functions of reserve troops and reserves for the field army, prepared, trained and supplied recruits.

A completely new organization of troops took shape by 1716. Its provisions were enshrined by the tsar in the "Military Regulations". This document can rightfully be called outstanding, as it summed up the whole historical era of the Russian army and generalized its combat experience. The basic principle of organizing a field army was stated in this charter as follows: “You need to have your own army, depending on the enemy’s strength and intention, in order to forestall him in all matters and look for the enemy in every possible way to refute” ””

In the course of military reforms, a radical reorganization of the entire system of military command and control was also carried out. Previous orders were abolished. Since 1720, the Military Collegium has been established as a body of central command and control of troops. Field Marshal AD Menshikov was appointed the first President of the Military Collegium. The management of the Navy was carried out by the Admiralty Board. In wartime, the head of the army was the commander-in-chief, directly subordinate to the tsar, under whom the Military Council was created, which played the role of an owl.

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guardian body, and the field headquarters headed by the quartermaster general. In fact, the quartermaster service was the prototype of the General Staff service. The duties of the quartermaster general included studying the area of upcoming hostilities, organizing the movement and deployment of troops, collecting information about the enemy, preparing maps, managing the construction of fortifications, bridges, etc.

In the Military Regulations of 1716, the rank of quartermaster general is given special importance, and therefore it is necessary to appoint to this position a “wise, reasonable and skillful person”, who also has knowledge of geography, fortification and artillery, “and he especially belongs to the general land to know in which one’s own and the enemy’s army is found” ”8.

The re-equipment of the army carried out as part of military reforms was completed by 1709. The infantry received the same type of firearms: smooth-bore guns with a flintlock and a three-sided bayonet. Artillery was given special attention. The adopted unified system of types and calibers facilitated their production and use in combat operations. Along with the reorganization of the army, Peter [continued the deployment of the navy, without which it was impossible to establish itself in the Baltic Sea. By 1722, the fleet in the Baltic already consisted of 130 (of which 32 linear) sailing and almost 400 rowing ships. Military reforms were carried out by Peter [during the period of practically unceasing hostilities. Nevertheless, he completely managed to put his plan into practice.

Planning to continue fighting with Turkey for access to the Black Sea, Peter is trying to expand the coalition of states ready to oppose her. And he succeeds. Immediately after the capture of Azov, an agreement was concluded in Vienna with Austria and the Venetian Republic, according to which the allies pledged to wage a joint fight against Turkey. But such an alliance, rather weak militarily, could not ensure a quick and decisive victory. Therefore, Peter [makes an attempt to attract a number of other Western European states to him. The "Great Embassy" is sent to Europe. Peter himself also participates in this trip [, but incognito. The mission of the embassy was not successful, since England, France, Holland and other states were preoccupied with the upcoming war for the Spanish succession, and they did not care about the war with Turkey. Nevertheless, a journey through the countries of Western Europe gave Peter the opportunity to delve into the nature of international relations at the turn of the 17th-17th centuries. It also turned out that the foreign policy situation is quite conducive to resolving a more important task for Russia — the return of access to the Baltic Sea. This goal could be achieved in one way - by war with Sweden.

Peter begins active diplomatic preparations for this war. First of all, Russia had to achieve peace with Turkey. The alliance concluded in 1699 with Denmark and Saxony was aimed at a joint struggle with the Swedes. Denmark and Saxony pledged to open hostilities, Russia, on the other hand, to join them immediately after the conclusion of peace with Turkey, and in addition to support the Saxon Elector Augustus II in his claims to the Polish throne. On August 9, 1700, Peter received a message about a peace treaty signed with Turkey, and

In accordance with the agreement reached by Russia with Denmark and Saxony, the following strategic plan was envisaged. Denmark must be the first to begin active operations against the Swedish provinces in Holstein and other areas, as well as launch a struggle at sea. At the same time, Saxony begins hostilities in the Baltic with the task of capturing Riga, and then transferring efforts to Courland and Estland. Russia was to open hostilities in Karelia and Ingria. Denmark had a relatively small army - 15-20 thousand people.

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Saxony could put up about 20 thousand people. Russia had 40 thousand people. Moreover, the forces of the allies were scattered in different theaters of war. Sweden, in addition to a large fleet, had a strong army of 140 thousand people "".

The Swedish army, well-armed and trained, was rightfully considered the best in Western Europe, and the King of Sweden, Karl HP, was a major commander. He was distinguished by decisiveness in military operations. In contrast to the generally accepted rule at that time, Karl KhPI preferred battle to fruitless maneuvering on enemy communications. He built his strategic plan on the expectation of withdrawing from the war first Denmark, then Poland, after which he would attack Russia with all his might.

The Northern War lasted more than 20 years and included three periods (1700-1706, 1706-1709 and 1710-1721). Its first period was mainly the struggle of Russia for mastery of the mouth of the Neva and all of Ingria (Izhora land). Peter [sought to implement a unified plan of action for the entire coalition. Given the favorable political environment, he strove to act quickly, decisively, and consistently. In accordance with Peter's strategic plan, the Russian army entered Ingria in order to capture the mouth of the Neva. Already in the course of this, it was supposed to solve the main strategic task - to achieve access to the Baltic Sea. At the same time, the circumstance was taken into account that here, in the most vulnerable place in the system of enemy fortresses built by Sweden along the entire border with Russia, it would be possible to easily defeat the enemy forces.

Peter provided his strategic plan with an appropriate grouping of troops and the creation of bases in the theater of operations. Novgorod and Pskov became rear bases. Such a plan differed sharply from the canons of a maneuver strategy, fully corresponded to the situation, tasks and features of the theater of war, and most importantly, proceeded from the real balance of forces. Its implementation was ensured by the created grouping of Russian troops. But the plan remained a plan. To a large extent, the failure is due to the actions of the Danish and Saxon armies. The passivity of the allies forced Peter to make adjustments to his actions: to transfer the main efforts from the mouth of the Neva to Narva. |

In an effort to seize the initiative, Charles HP concluded a military agreement with England. With the help of the Anglo-Dutch squadron, he landed troops on the territory of Denmark and moved to Copenhagen*?. The King of Denmark immediately capitulated. Such turns in military events were quite typical for the small states of Western Europe at that time.

After the victory over Denmark, Karl KhP launched an offensive against the Russian army, which was besieging Narva. The battle near Narva took place on November 19, 1700. While the Russian troops numbered about 34 thousand people and 145 guns, the Swedes had 23-25 thousand people and 37 guns®. Despite the numerical superiority, the Russian army suffered a crushing defeat, losing 8 thousand people killed and captured. The main reason for the defeat was that the Russian army consisted of poorly trained units with no combat experience, not ready for war with such a dangerous enemy as the Swedes. "To say in one word," wrote Peter [. - the whole thing, like an infant's play was, and art is below the surface; then what a surprise for such an old, trained and practiced army over such an inexperienced one to find victory "".

Karl HIP, confident that Russia would not quickly restore its forces after the defeat near Narva, moved troops to Poland and the Baltic states. Using this, Peter [begins an intensive restructuring of the army, mobilizing for this all the internal resources of the country. The enormous work carried out by him to strengthen the military and economic power of the state and the construction of the armed forces has borne fruit. Russia in co

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short terms got the opportunity to again engage in the fight against the main forces of Sweden.

From 1701 to 1704 there was no contact between the main forces, although hostilities almost did not stop. Peter's strategy during these years consisted in concentrating the main efforts on returning the mouth of the Neva River to Russia, as well as in striving to achieve a change in the balance of forces by the time of the decisive battles. Fulfilling this strategic plan, Russian troops in 1702 during the assault took two fortresses - Marienburg and Noteburg (Schlisselburg), then captured the Swedish fortress Nyenschantz. The exit to the Gulf of Finland was won. At the mouth of the Neva was built the first sea fortress - Peter and Paul. Under her protection, on May 16, 1703, St. Petersburg was founded.

The following year, Peter concentrated his main efforts on capturing Narva. On May 30, the siege of the fortress began. The Russian troops numbered 22,000 men and 100 guns, while the Swedish troops numbered 4,500 men and 529 guns. On August 9, after the assault, the garrison of the fortress laid down their arms. The losses of the Russian troops amounted to 1,650 people killed and wounded, the Swedish losses - 2,700 people killed and wounded, | 800 people surrendered. The capture of Narva significantly improved Russia's position in the Baltics. The enemy was driven back to the Revel-Pernov-Riga line. The Russian army cleared Ingermanland from the Swedes. Estonia and Livonia. To secure St. Petersburg, it was necessary to hurry with the creation of a strong fleet on the Baltic Sea.

The military operations that had just ended showed that Peter's strategic plan met the conditions of the current situation. With a shortage of forces, the main attention was paid to the accumulation of reserves and the rapid maneuver of troops. As a result of active actions in 1701-1704. managed to break in parts all the Swedish troops in the Gulf of Finland and on the banks of the Neva. With the general defensive plan of the war, Peter [already at that time managed to achieve the first part of the strategic task. Russia received a long-awaited access to the Baltic Sea. The young Russian army gained combat experience and believed in its own strength. "Finally, we have reached the point," wrote Peter, "that we are already defeating the Swedes"?5.

Having accumulated significant forces, Peter in 1705 moved to a more active strategy. Now the main efforts are transferred to Poland, where about 40 thousand infantry and 20 thousand cavalry were sent. The offensive of the main forces of the Russian army in Poland was due to military and political necessity, since Augustus II, having suffered a series of defeats, was already thinking about making peace with Sweden. It was here that Peter [showed an example of the fulfillment of allied obligations, an understanding of the requirements of the coalition strategy. Now we had to fight in a new, very difficult theater of operations. The second period of the Northern War began.

Russian troops, acting in two strategic directions (Polotsk, Siauliai and Vilna, Grodno), hung over the flank and rear of the Swedes. Karl HP had to weaken offensive operations against the Polish-Saxon troops. Peter [achieved his goal: August II did not withdraw from the war, the political situation in Poland improved significantly for Russia. At the same time, active hostilities in the Western theater contributed to the consolidation of the positions won by the Russians in the Baltic states, and most importantly, time was won for further strengthening the army and navy.

However, already at the beginning of 1706, Karl KhP, taking advantage of the departure of the Saxon troops from Grodno to Saxony, launched a surprise attack on Grodno, which was defended by 35,000 Russians. In March, the Russian army broke out of encirclement and retreated to Kyiv. This maneuver thwarted the Swedes' plan to defeat the Russian army. But in the meantime, the situation in Poland became more complicated. The Swedish king moved with the main forces to Volyn, where he dealt a crushing blow to the Polish-Saxon war

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Scheme 5. The Northern War and other wars waged by Russia under Peter 1

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scam In the autumn of 1706, Charles XP occupied most of central Poland, which forced August II to sign the humiliating Altranstadt Treaty, according to which Poland broke off its alliance with Russia. This allowed the Swedes to finally gain a foothold in Poland and go on the offensive against the Russian army. This time Karl HP aimed his main blow at Moscow. The Swedish army began a rapid advance from the region of the Middle Vistula. Having reached the communications of the Russian army, the Swedes cut off part of it in the western regions of Belarus. Russian troops found themselves in a very difficult situation: winter was coming, fodder and food were running out, large enemy forces wedged between scattered groups of Russian troops. Fortunately, Peter [proved to be a real strategist. He considered that in this case “a healthy retreat is better than an immense gasart” (excitement - Ed.) * 7.

In December 1706, in the town of Zholkiev, near Lvov, a military council met, at which a plan was developed for the further conduct of the war. The Zholkiev plan was based on the organization of active defense in the regions of Poland and Belarus in order to weaken the enemy army and create more favorable conditions for the Russians. The members of the council agreed on “meeting the enemy in Poland, but not giving a decisive battle in Poland, because if some misfortune happened, it would be difficult to have a retreat and for this it was supposed to fight at one’s own borders, when the need would demand it; and in Poland at crossings and passes, also the exposure of provisions and fodder, to torment the enemy ”?

At the end of December 1707, the army of Charles HP began a campaign against Russia. The plan of the Swedes was to attack Moscow with the main forces, numbering 44.5 thousand people, through Smolensk. General Liebeker's corps (14,000 men) was tasked with capturing St. Petersburg, and A. Lewenhaupt's corps (16,000 men) with the task of advancing from Riga to link up with the main forces for subsequent actions in the Moscow area.

Peter [deciphered this plan of the enemy. He opposed him with his strategic defensive plan. Having concentrated the main forces to cover the Moscow direction, he fought them back into the depths of the country, exhausting the enemy forces in defensive battles, destroying them in parts with blows from mobile detachments, disrupting communications, supplies, etc. The enemy very soon began to test an acute shortage of food and fodder

feed the war. That is why, as early as October 1708, Charles XP was forced to abandon the campaign against Moscow and turn towards the Ukraine. Skillful actions Peter I achieved a change in the strategic situation?^o.

It was during this period that Peter I developed and used new forms of active military operations. From now on, the maneuver became not an end in itself, but a means of creating the most favorable conditions for a general battle and the complete defeat of the enemy army. With great skill, Peter uses flying detachments detached from the main forces. Their task is to strike at the enemy's stretched communications. Further development is the linear battle formation, which made it possible to fully use the power of small arms.

The most significant event in that period was the victory of the Russian troops at the river. Forest. On September 28, 1708, Lewenhaupt's corps was defeated there. The balance of forces immediately changed in favor of the Russian army. Simultaneously, the troops of F. M. Apraksin defeated Liebekers' corps. As a result, the strategic initiative passed into the hands of Peter I. In the winter of 1708/1709 the international situation was developing for the better for Russia. The ongoing War of the Spanish Succession did not allow the European powers to join the Northern War

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Peter I achieved the isolation of the Swedish troops from Poland, and E, by diplomacy, thwarted all attempts by Karl HP to draw Turkey into the war.

The Swedish army did not manage to replenish its material reserves until the very spring. The "small war" strategy (constant attacks by regular troops and partisans) undermined its strength. In the spring of 1709, Karl KhP, hoping to get out of the strategic impasse, decided to quickly capture Poltava, where he expected to wait for reinforcements from Turkey and the Crimea. The defense of Poltava fettered the Swedish troops for three months, which allowed the Russian army to concentrate its main forces in that area.

On June 27, the general battle of the Northern War unfolded - the Battle of Poltava. By that time, the Russian army numbered 42 thousand people, the Swedish troops - about 30 thousand. Having repelled the initial onslaught of the Swedes, the Russians themselves dealt a powerful blow. Having overturned the enemy, they proceeded to pursue him. Almost the entire Swedish army was defeated. Her losses in killed and wounded amounted to 9.2 thousand people, captured - 14.8

thousand

The Battle of Poltava was not only of great strategic importance, but also political. It became the turning point of the entire war, which significantly strengthened Russia's foreign policy positions. Augustus II, restored to the throne, renewed the alliance with Russia, Denmark again joined the anti-Swedish alliance. The scale of the war expanded: it was now being fought in the Baltic States, Germany, Finland, the Baltic and North Seas^o.

The victory at Poltava is the result of a carefully prepared and skilfully executed strategic plan. However, Peter I proved himself in this battle as a good tactician. This is evidenced by the rugged terrain chosen by him for the general battle, the strengthening of positions with redoubts, the construction of a deep battle formation, the reinforcement of the attacking troops with reserves, the skillful use of cavalry, which largely determined success.

The Battle of Poltava ended the second period of the Northern War and became a clear indication of the growing military power of Russia. Her military strategy proved unsurpassed. The planned solution of tasks, the organization of military operations based, on the one hand, on an accurate assessment of one's own capabilities, and on the other hand, on a thorough assessment of the enemy, combined with the breadth of strategic plans, high activity, and the desire to achieve victory by defeating the enemy's main forces in a general battle - all this favorably distinguished the Russian military strategy from the "maneuvering strategy" of the Western European armies, which clearly manifested itself in the War of the Spanish Succession.

After the Battle of Poltava, the Baltic region became the main theater of military operations. Having defeated the main forces of the Swedish army in the Ukraine, Peter decides to develop an offensive against Riga, Vyborg and Kexholm in order to, having mastered these strategic points, begin a direct struggle for dominance in the Baltic Sea. And at this stage, his determination in solving such grandiose tasks is striking. After all, simultaneously with measures to develop the armed forces, primarily the construction of the navy, it was necessary to take possession of Riga, Vyborg and Kexholm * ".

However, despite the successful military operations for the Russians in the Baltic states, they had to be temporarily stopped. The fact is that in November 1710, Turkey, with the direct support of Austria and France, declared war on Russia. In 1711, the 40,000th Russian army reached the Prut. Here she was surrounded by several times superior forces of the Turks. The situation of the army cut off from the bases and surrounded was extremely difficult. Peter I immediately began negotiations, as a result of which Russia ceded Azov to Turkey and undertook to tear down the fortifications in Taganrog?? The Prut campaign of 1711 ended unsuccessfully for Russia. However, it would

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it is a mistake to consider it in isolation from the policy and strategy of Peter I in the Northern War. In the Prut campaign, he intended to defeat Turkey and thereby ensure the successful conduct of the Northern War. Realizing that Turkey's action was inevitable, Peter nevertheless remained true to his main strategic line - to achieve victory over Sweden and consolidate Russia's position in the Baltic. Therefore, the plan of the Prut campaign was based on the idea of a powerful blow in the direction of the lower reaches of the Danube, so that there, by attracting the peoples of the Balkans enslaved by Turkey, to inflict a major defeat on it. Peter sought, ahead of the enemy, to withdraw the Russian troops to the Danube before the main forces of the Turks crossed the river. In reaching this frontier, and even more so in overcoming areas poor in food and water, he saw

an important condition for success. However, he failed to achieve this: this time he underestimated the strength of the enemy. The Russian Tsar had to abandon the offensive.

One of the reasons for the failures that befell the Russians in the Prut campaign was ignorance of the true location of the Turkish troops, which, of course, was to blame for intelligence, as well as the limited capabilities of the Russian army.

In the instruction sent to the ambassadors of Russia abroad after the Prut campaign, Peter [reports: "We announce to you that with great zeal we went to the Danube in order to forestall the Turks and get satisfaction in provisions, but the Turks forestalled us and met with us at Prut, where the terrible battles were..."?]. But the complete victory of Turkey was far away. Therefore, she agreed to conclude peace, and most importantly, she allowed the Russian army to leave with weapons and, more importantly, she refused to interfere in the Northern War.

Now Peter [could again launch an offensive in the Baltic. The first priority for him was the expulsion of the Swedes from Finland. At the same time, Russian troops under the command of Menshikov operated in Pomerania. At that time it was already a province of Sweden. The strategic leadership of military operations in Finland turned out to be at its best - especially in terms of organizing the combined efforts of the army and navy, a special galley, best adapted to maneuver in the rugged coastal strip. In the spring of 1713, a Russian expedition was equipped under the command of Apraksin. An army of 17,000 men on rowboats was to capture Helsingfors and expel the Swedes from Finland, from where they received food and raw materials. In the decree to the commander of the expedition, Peter wrote: "We can't bring the Swedes to reason and inclination for peace like Finland, from where they are content with everything"?

The capture of Helsingfors was a victory of strategic importance, since the Russian troops received a naval base convenient for further operations in Finland, and the Swedes lost an important stronghold on the Baltic Sea. The good preparation of the expedition, surprise and decisiveness, combined with the skillful actions of the sailors and landing forces, ensured this success.

So, the Swedish troops in Finland were defeated, the Swedish land army suffered a sensitive loss. However, Sweden still remained strong at sea. Therefore, the third period of the Northern War is characterized by the transfer of strategic efforts to the maritime theater. The wide-ranging actions of the naval forces, together with the landing of a number of landing forces, have borne fruit. The Russian fleet wins brilliant victories at Cape Gangut (1714) and at Ezel Island (1719). Now, for the final revenge over Sweden, it was necessary to transfer hostilities to the territory of Sweden itself. The fighting took place on land and at sea. In 1719, the Russian fleet landed troops in the Vaxholm area. Successfully acting, he began to threaten Stockholm. By this time, the Russian fleet had already achieved complete superiority at sea, which was confirmed by the victory of Russian sailors over the Swedish squadron at Grengam

Military strategy of the Russian Empire in the 18th century. 59

(1720). Having defeated the Swedes, the Russian fleet finally won dominance in the Baltic Sea.

The war, which lasted more than 20 years, exhausted Sweden to the limit. Peace negotiations began. On August 30, 1721, the long-awaited peace was concluded. Under the terms of the Treaty of Nystad, Russia received the mouth of the Neva and a significant part of the coast of the Baltic Sea, as well as the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland with Vyborg and Kexholm. So Russia regained access to the Baltic Sea.

Northern War 1700-1721 was of great importance for the development of Russian military art, because the army of Peter [developed and applied the most advanced methods of warfare at that time. In the field of strategy, the connection between war and politics was clearly demonstrated. The strategy of the Russian army proceeded from taking into account the specific international situation, but was determined by state policy.

A distinctive feature of Russian strategy is the decisiveness in achieving the goal set in the war. In the era of dominance in Europe of the cordon strategy, which was based on the desire to cover the vital centers of the country at all costs, the Russian high military command develops and puts into practice a completely different concept - the concentration of forces and their maneuvering in the entire theater of war. The battle, and not fruitless maneuvering on the enemy's communications, is the main means of achieving victory, and hence the solution of strategic tasks. For this, superiority in forces was ensured through the skillful regrouping of troops in the main direction.

The strategy of the Russian army at that time was characterized by a skillful choice of the direction of the main attack and forms of struggle. In most cases, the Russian command expediently determined the direction of concentration of the main efforts of the troops both as a whole and at individual stages of the war (Narva, Poltava). In Russian strategy, as a rule, those methods of conducting military operations were rationally determined, which were dictated by the conditions of the struggle. Moreover, these methods were always different. So, at one stage of the war, active defense comes to the fore, at another - the offensive, at the third - the landing of troops on enemy territory.

In conducting military operations with the Swedes, the Russian army widely used the defeat of the enemy in parts, encirclement, pursuit, siege of fortresses, as well as small forms of war. The basis of the latter was strikes by flying detachments on the rear, communications, and individual points of deployment of the enemy army. During the Northern War, a strategic counter-offensive was prepared and carried out. Under Peter [the foundations of an offensive strategy with decisive goals were laid. Peter himself was a staunch follower of this strategy. The desire to achieve a successful end to the war by active actions was expressed in delivering successive blows to the enemy. Subsequently, this form of strategy was developed by P. A. Rumyantsev, A. V. Suvorov, and M. I. Kutuzov.

The Petrine era was characterized by skillful interaction between the army and the navy. Military operations at sea were carried out just as decisively as on land. Peter Guy his associates developed a strategic system

basins of the fleet and skillfully organized the defense of the newly built bases. The creation of bases and the organization of defense along the entire coast of the Baltic Sea made it possible to reliably secure the positions won during the war.

In general, in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. the fundamental foundations of the imperial military strategy were laid. A major role in this belongs to Peter the Great, an outstanding commander and military organizer.

In the second half of the eighteenth century The Russian Empire pursued a particularly active foreign policy in order to strengthen its external borders, gain a wide outlet to the Black Sea, and consolidate its own positions in the Baltic. Not less than

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an important task was the further collection of lands - the reunification of the Belarusian and Ukrainian peoples with Russia.

The offensive nature of Russia's foreign policy could not but be reflected in its strategy. Never before has Russia waged so many wars, and over a relatively short historical period. In the second half of the XVIIIth century. it is almost continuously at war. The Russian armed forces take part in eight wars: the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), the war with Sweden (1788-1790), two Russian-Turkish wars (1768-1774 and 1787-1791), three wars with Poland (1768-1790). 1772, 1792 and 1794), the war against France (1799) as part of the second anti-French coalition. In some years, the Russian army and navy had to fight simultaneously in two theaters of military operations far from each other.

Such large foreign policy goals required appropriate armed forces. By the middle of the century, the Russian land army had 331 thousand people in the states, including 172 thousand in the field (active) army, 74 thousand in the garrison troops, 28 thousand in the settled troops, in the artillery and engineering corps - 13 thousand people, in irregular troops - 44 thousand people. In the event of war, Russia was able to field up to 220 thousand people, leaving over 110 thousand for internal service.

Russia also possessed large naval forces. Thus, the Baltic Fleet included two squadrons. The Kronstadt squadron had 14 battleships with 954 guns, 5 frigates, pram and 2 bombardment ships. The Revel squadron included 6 battleships with 372 guns and 3 frigates. In Reval there was also a galley fleet, numbering 42 galleys*.

In the middle of the eighteenth century The sharply aggravated situation in Europe had an impact on the nature of the Russian strategy. The complex intertwining of contradictions and interests of states, primarily in France and England, led to the creation of coalitions, and then to a military clash between them, which resulted in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). England entered into an alliance with Prussia, and France with Austria and Russia, a little later they were joined by Saxony and Sweden. The struggle between the strong maritime powers England and France, that is, the main participants in the war, was carried out with imperial goals. Austria, which considered Prussia as the main rival in the struggle for hegemony in Germany, saw its main goal in the war in the return of rich Silesia, captured in 1740 by the Prussian king Frederick II. In turn, Prussia sought to expand its borders at the expense of the German principalities and the Baltic states .

Russia in this war pursued the goal of preventing the strengthening of Prussian influence in the Baltic states and securing its lands there. "Prussia, due to the proximity of the neighborhood and the great threatened force, represents the first and main danger to Russia," noted Russian Chancellor A.P. Bestuzhev-Ryumin.

The main role in the Seven Years' War was played by the confrontation between the Prussian army under the command of Friedrich II and the Russian army, which was successively commanded by Field Marshal S. F. Apraksin, Generals V. V. Fermor, P. S. Saltykov, Field Marshal A. B. Buturlin . From the very beginning, the Conference created under Empress Elizabeth I became the supreme body of the military leadership of Russia, which concentrated in its hands the development of all plans for the war. Troop commanders have become mere executors, devoid of any independence whatsoever.

The Seven Years' War resulted in five campaigns. In the campaign of 1756-1757. Frederick inflicted a number of defeats on the Austrian and French troops. But, starting from the summer of 1757, Russian troops were actively involved in hostilities. strategic

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The goal of this campaign was defined by the Conference as the mastery of East Prussia. For this, the Russian army of Field Marshal Apraksin, numbering 65,187 people? concentrated in the Kovno area. The forces of the Russian army in East Prussia were opposed by the corps of Field Marshal Lewald, consisting of almost 30 thousand people®.

The campaign plan developed by the Conference contained the following requirement when advancing into East Prussia: "... stop the retreat in this army and force them to give a general battle"! 0.

But, despite the significant superiority in forces, the command of the Russian army acted indecisively. The troops advanced very slowly, although the Conference repeatedly insisted that the commander-in-chief crush Lewald's forces and advance on Koenigsberg. But Apraksin was in no hurry. Taking advantage of this, Lewald decided to strike back. He counted not only on surprise, but also on the qualitative superiority of his troops. On August 19, a battle took place near the village of Gross-Egersdorf. The suddenly attacked Russian army was able to quickly reorganize its battle formations in a wooded area. Russian soldiers not only repulsed the enemy attack, but also defeated it. However, after the battle

Apraksin did not take advantage of the disorder in the ranks of the enemy's army and did not dare to complete the victory by vigorously pursuing him. Moreover, he gave the order to retreat. The commander-in-chief motivated his decision by the fact that there was not a sufficient supply of food and fodder, and the army was too far from the stores, that is, from the rear supply bases. In other words, Apraksin acted in those "best" traditions of maneuver strategy that dominated then in Europe. Unfortunately, the advance that the Russian army acquired under Peter [in the field of strategy] was forgotten.

The conference did not reconcile itself to the unsuccessful campaign in East Prussia. The Russian army, which had retreated to winter quarters in Lithuania and Courland, was put in order. Apraksin was replaced by General Fermor. In January 1758, East Prussia was occupied by Russian troops in a short time!'. This was facilitated by the fact that Friedrich Z sent Lewald's army to Pomerania, and entrusted the defense of East Prussia to weak units. He was let down by the belief that the Russian army was not capable of an offensive in winter conditions. The sudden advance of the Russians made it impossible for the Prussians to organize resistance. By January 10, the Russian troops, according to the report of the commander, "are safely without damage and without the slightest resistance from the inhabitants"! °? occupied Koenigsberg. East Prussia was annexed to the possessions of the Russian state. Thus, an important strategic task, outlined by the Russian government upon entry into the war, was successfully solved.

Having occupied East Prussia, the Russian army began preparations for a new offensive. However, her forces were scattered over a large area, there was no clear plan for the summer campaign. This situation was partly explained by disagreements in the Conference, but no less by the position of Austria, Russia's main ally, because Vienna did not want further success for the Russian army, and therefore often changed its plans.

The main goal of the summer campaign was the capture of the Kustrin fortress - an important strategic point, a junction of roads and crossings at the confluence of the Oder and Warta, besides, Kustrin covered the path to Berlin. The conference believed that "having mastered Kustrin, we can justly be satisfied with that, almost for the entire campaign to us and our allies"! Thus, the strategic goal of the campaign was very limited and was not aimed at defeating the main enemy forces, that is, it bore the features of the same maneuver strategy.

Friedrich II, fearing for Berlin, arrived with his army at the beginning of August in the area of operations of the Russian troops. August 14, 1758 near the village of Zorndorf between the Russians

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and the Prussian troops fought a big battle. It lasted about ten hours, but did not bring victory to either side. The famous "oblique attack" of the Prussians crashed against the stamina of the Russian soldiers. The Russians lost about 20 thousand people, the Prussians - 12 thousand¹⁹⁴

After Zorndorf, Fermor added Rumyantsev's fresh corps to his troops. This allowed him to gain a significant numerical superiority over the Prussian army, especially since Frederick left with part of his forces for Saxony. But Fermor's mistake was that he made no attempt to attack the enemy. Fermor maneuvered or stood in areas east of the Oder. True, he undertook the siege of Kolberg, but did not succeed. In November, he completely returned to his former winter quarters, located on the Lower Vistula.

Thus, the campaign of 1758, which began very successfully for the Russian army, in the end did not lead to a decisive change in the strategic situation. Only the lack of unity in the actions of the coalition armies allowed Frederick II to avoid complete defeat. The indecisiveness of the Austrian commander-in-chief L. Daun and the mediocre leadership of the Russian army by Fermor played their negative role.

In 1759 the Conference drew up a strategic plan for the next campaign. The Russian army was supposed to launch military operations in Pomerania, first of all, to capture Kolberg and Stettin. This plan was most in line with ensuring Russia's interests in the Baltics. However, it had to be abandoned. Russia's allies, Austria and France, demanded the advance of the Russian army to the middle reaches of the river. Oder for joint operations with the Austrians against the main forces of Friedrich P.

In mid-June, the Russian army concentrated in Poznan. Its new commander-in-chief, general-in-chief Saltykov, who was appointed instead of Fermor, also arrived here. From here, the Russian army moved to the area of the city of Crossen, where it was supposed to connect with the Austrians, but they were not there. The Austrian commander Daun had his own calculations: he wanted to shift all the hardships of the fight against the Prussians onto the Russians in order to preserve his forces. Based on this, he continued to insist that the Russian army advance into Silesia. In other words, he was going to fully use it to fight for the interests of Austria. Daun's claims were categorically rejected by Saltykov. The Russian commander-in-chief decided to capture Frankfurt an der Oder and from here to threaten the Prussian capital, Berlin, from here. Daun, dissatisfied with the independent actions of General Saltykov, in every possible way prevented his attack on Berlin.

Since the Austrians evaded joint actions, the Russian army on July 21, 1759 independently captured Frankfurt an der Oder. Instead of advancing the main forces to this city, Daun sent only Loudon's corps numbering 18 thousand people there. The position of the Russian commander-in-chief was unenviable: Petersburg demanded joint action with the Austrians, the same always violated their obligations and pursued a line that directly contradicted the interests of the Russian army, and indeed of the entire truly coalition strategy. But a decisive attack on Berlin would have led to a speedy and victorious end to the war. But Austria deviated from such a plan, not wanting to allow a further increase in the strength and possessions of Russia! °.

Friedrich, realizing that the main danger threatens him from the Russian army, decided at all costs

break Her. He crossed below Frankfurt across the Oder and attacked the Russians, who had taken up positions near the village of Kunersdorf. This battle was the largest during the Seven Years' War. It ended with the complete defeat of the Prussian army, which lost 19 thousand people, while the Russian lost about 5 thousand. After the battle, Friedrich fled with his closest encirclement.

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Symbols / Russian and Austrian troops Location of troops 4 Prussian troops © Russian and Austrian OV The area of Russian winter quarters @ Prussian troops in 1769-61. Scale 50 0 50 100 km = —s=s_ ———“-`5"=—"=—.-.—.—_—

Scheme 6. Seven Years' War. Campaign 1759--176T

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zhenie. In one of his letters about his defeat he wrote: "I'm unhappy that I'm still alive..."®. But by the will of the Austrian command, the opportunity that then opened up for the Russians to occupy the Prussian capital and achieve an end to the war was never realized.

In the campaign of 1760, General Saltykov transferred the main efforts of the Russian army to Pomerania, and sent part of the troops to a raid on Berlin. As a result, the Russian corps of General 3. G. Chernyshev, numbering 23 thousand people, occupied Berlin on October 9. Willy-nilly, the Austrian army had to actively tie down the main forces of the army of Frederick II, but this time the Austrians did not fulfill their allied obligations. Frederick was able to lead his army to Berlin. That is why General Chernyshev, after destroying military depots and other military installations, retreated with his corps to join the main forces of the Russian army in the Frankfurt area, where the Russian army settled down for winter quarters. Saltykov relinquished command of the army due to illness. The conference appointed Field Marshal A. B. Buturlin as commander-in-chief. In general, the campaign of 1760 did not bring major strategic results to the Russian troops, although the Prussian capital fell into their hands for some time.

The most important event of the 1761 campaign was the capture on December 16 by Russian troops under the command of General Rumyantsev of a strong fortress - Kolberg. Having thus established itself in Pomerania, the Russian army established contact with the Swedish army for a joint attack on Berlin from the north. In the campaign of 1761, Prussia lost South Silesia, but worst of all, it was cut off from Poland, which provided food, and from the Baltic Sea. It seemed that Frederick II was completely driven into a corner. But everything changed on January 5, 1762, when Empress Elizaveta Petrovna died. Peter III, who ascended the throne, an ardent admirer of the Prussian king, led Russia out of the war, moreover, he returned to Prussia all the territory occupied by Russian troops and concluded an alliance treaty with it, which saved Prussia from complete defeat. Catherine II, who ascended the throne in June 1762, terminated the alliance with Prussia, but did not resume the war.

The Seven Years' War was the last major war fought according to the principles of a maneuver strategy designed to exhaust the enemy by endless maneuvering, i.e., avoiding decisive action. In general, Russia also adhered to such a strategy, but its army had a number of features that favorably distinguished it from other armies in Europe. In particular, the idea embodied in the plan of the Conference for 1759 deserves attention: "give a decisive battle" and "put an end to the whole war"! 7. The brilliant victories of the Russian army near Kunersdorf, Berlin and Koenigsberg were achieved not by maneuvering, but by decisive actions aimed at achieving the set goals.

New phenomena in the field of strategy were the active actions of the Russian troops in winter conditions (the offensive in East Prussia in January 1758, the capture of Kolberg in 1761), as well as the joint coordinated actions of the ground forces and the navy during the siege of the same Kolberg.

The experience of the Conference, a collective body of strategic military leadership, deserves attention. First of all, this is a clear delineation of the spheres of activity of the Conference and the commander-in-chief in the theater of operations, aimed at not restricting the latter's independence, but at the same time providing him with reasonable assistance. The rich combat experience acquired by the Russian army in the Seven Years' War contributed to the further development of the domestic military strategy.

The Seven Years' War showed that the difference in political interests pursued by each member of the coalition leads to inconsistency in military operations.

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the desire to prevent the strengthening of Russia in every possible way, Austria and France frustrated the strategic plans of the Russian command, which was to the benefit of their common enemy.

After the Seven Years' War, the center of gravity of Russia's military efforts was shifted to the southern borders. The main problem was the annexation of the Black Sea territories. The practical solution of this problem inevitably led to a military clash with Turkey. For two decades, two wars between Russia and Turkey followed one after another - from 1768 to 1774 and from 1787 to 1791. In these wars, the interests of not only these two empires clashed. They clearly show the global issues of all European politics. The developed countries of Western Europe, not interested in the strengthening of Russia, preferred to take the side of Turkey. For Russia, the situation was further complicated by the fact that simultaneously with the Russian-Turkish war in 1768-1774. she had to wage war with the Polish confederates, and in parallel with the next Russian-Turkish war, the Russian-Swedish war of 1788-1790 broke out. Austria during the first four years of the war 1768-1774. took a hostile stance towards Russia. Prussia threatened military intervention in favor of Turkey in 1768-1774, England in 1787-1791. Only in two campaigns (1788 and 1789) did Russia act against Turkey, having Austria as an ally. All this diverted a significant part of the Russian forces to directions very remote from the theater of war with Turkey.

Achieving such a major political goal as annexing the Black Sea lands and securing the Black Sea posed a very difficult task for Russia's strategy. The theater of war had a huge extent (from the Upper Dniester to the middle reaches of the Terek) and a very great depth. The capital of Turkey - Istanbul and its largest cities in the European part were covered by several natural boundaries, reinforced by the fortresses of Khotyn, Bendery and Akkerman on the Dniester. This was followed by a powerful water barrier - the Danube with a chain of well-fortified fortresses, and to the south - the Balkan Range. To the west and south-west of the Dniester stretched waterless steppe spaces. And the Turkish fleet completely dominated the Black Sea. Turkey's Middle Eastern possessions - Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt - represented a rear inaccessible to the enemy and at the same time served as an extensive source of replenishment for its armed forces. For the Russian strategy, a very contradictory situation was emerging: on the one hand, political goals required the use of the most resolute active actions, and on the other hand, the conditions of the theater of war severely limited the possibility of achieving success in this way.

In the autumn of 1768, Türkiye, under the influence of France and Austria, declared war on Russia. The struggle unfolded simultaneously in three theaters: Balkan, Caucasian and Polish. The struggle in the Balkans was especially difficult, since the Russian army was at a great distance from its bases. Serious problems arose with the replenishment of its human resources and the supply of troops.

The strategic plan of the Turkish command provided for the concentration of a 300,000-strong army on the border with Poland. It assumed that in the Khotyn area the army of the Polish Confederates would join it, and this would allow them to deliver a joint strike through Kamenetz-Podolsk to Kyiv and Smolensk. In addition to the main army, two auxiliary ones were to come out: one from the Crimea - to Ukraine, and the other - from the North Caucasus to Astrakhan.

The Russian strategic plan, developed by the Military Council, which was created instead of the Conference, was intended to prevent the joint actions of the Turkish and Polish forces. Russia created two armies. I, under the command of A. M. Golitsyn, numbering 65 thousand people, was supposed to operate in the main direction. 2nd Army under the leadership of Rumyantsev in the amount of 60 thousand people before

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it was necessary to cover the regions of Ukraine. Two small detachments were sent to the Kuban and Georgia.

In accordance with the strategic plan, the main blow was delivered on Khotyn, although this limited the goals of the offensive, Rumyantsev proposed to attack not on Khotyn, but on Ochakov, which would have had more decisive goals, but his plan was rejected. The campaign of 1769 was conducted indecisively due to the extremely sluggish actions of Golitsyn, though Khotin was taken! . In autumn, Golitsyn was recalled to Petersburg, and Rumyantsev was appointed commander of the 1st Army. The command of the 2nd Army was entrusted to P.P. Panin.

The strategic plan of the campaign of 1770 was reduced to the capture of the Bendery fortress by the forces of the 2nd army. The 1st Army was supposed to cover Bender from the Danube. Thus, the plan worked out in St. Petersburg doomed the main forces to passive actions.

Having familiarized himself with the plan of the Military Council, Rumyantsev presented his plan to Catherine II. He pointed out that the best means of influencing the enemy is an offensive with all forces, and the most expedient

to conduct it "between the Prut and Seret, having bridges on the Prut"! °. Moreover, he considered it necessary to have a foothold on the right bank of the Prut in the Iasi region. In essence, Rumyantsev proposed a completely new campaign plan, according to which his army was to advance in a decisive direction - to the flank and rear of the enemy's main forces. According to Rumyantsev, this was supposed to help the 2nd Army capture Bendery and enable significant forces to go on the offensive in the direction of the lower Danube. Rumyantsev's report was an example of creative military-strategic thought. Although his proposals were not approved in St. Petersburg, he achieved the granting of freedom of action.

From April 1770, Rumyantsev began to implement the plan. The Russian army launched a decisive offensive. Its main forces, numbering about 30 thousand people with 112 field guns and 142 regimental artillery guns, began to advance from the Khotyn region in the interfluvium of the Prut and Seret, that is, in the general direction to Galati. ^

In the campaign of 1770, the land forces carried out strategic interaction with the fleet. The Russian fleet, sent from Kronstadt and Revel, operated in the Mediterranean, diverting the attention of the enemy. Then the Russian fleet, blocking the Dardanelles, disrupted the communications of the Turkish army with Asiatic Turkey. These actions were the first time in military history that the method of long-range blockade was used.

In turn, the Turkish command, having transported the 150,000th army across the Danube, near Isaccha, moved it in the direction of Iasi, providing for the simultaneous advancement of the 80,000th cavalry of the Crimean Tatars in the direction of Chisinau! '?

In June, Russian troops concentrated at Ryaba Mogila. Within a month, three battles took place (near the Ryaba Mogila, near the Larga and Kagul rivers), during which the Turkish troops were defeated. It is especially noteworthy that the Russian army was several times smaller than the Turkish one: in the battle at the Pockmarked Grave - 39 thousand Russians against 70 thousand of the enemy, in the battle at the river. Larga - 39 thousand against 80 thousand, in the battle of Cahul - 27 thousand Russian troops against 150 thousand Turkish vizier Galil Bey and 80 thousand Tatar cavalry. "To defeat great forces with a small number," Field Marshal Rumyantsev said, "there is art and great glory here!" 3. In all these battles, the commander of the 1st Army did not distribute his troops evenly along the entire front. on the decisive point of the enemy's position. Rumyantsev widely used the battle formations of columns and loose formation. He was the first to use divisional squares,

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placing the cavalry in the intervals between them and on the flanks. Divisional squares turned out to be invulnerable to the attacks of the numerous cavalry of the Turks. Kare had the ability to maneuver on the battlefield, interact with each other. Their attacks were prepared by massive artillery fire.

Having defeated the main enemy forces, Rumyantsev decided to use his victory to achieve the overall success of the entire campaign. It was most expedient to take possession of the system of Turkish fortresses in the lower reaches of the Danube. In a short time, Russian troops under his command occupy Izmail, Kiliya, Akkerman and Brailov. The successes of the 1st Russian Army facilitated the task of the 2nd Army. Its commander, Panin, had to act more decisively. Soon the troops of the 2nd Army took Bendery.

The victories of the Russian troops in the land theater were complemented by successes at sea. The Russian fleet under the leadership of Admiral G. A. Spiridov, although Count Alexei Orlov was officially considered the commander, on July 7 destroyed the Turkish fleet in the Chesme Bay. In this battle, Spiridov once again proved that Russian naval theory is rightfully considered the most advanced. The Russian fleet, developing the best traditions of the time of Peter the Great, having gone through a great strategic school, was at that time one of the best in the world.

Major successes have also been achieved in the Caucasus. Georgian troops under the command of Heraclius II (1794-1798) defeated the Turkish army in the battle of Aspinza. At the same time, a detachment of Russian troops operating in Imereti liberated the fortresses of Tsutskvat, Shoropni and Kutais occupied by the Turks!

So, the campaign of 1770 was successfully completed in all theaters of the war. However, it did not lead to the end of the war. Such major successes of the Russian troops were clearly frightened in Europe. Therefore, Austria began to move closer to Turkey. A position hostile to Russia was taken by Prussia and Sweden. Emboldened by this, Türkiye

decided not to end the war. All the fortresses in the Balkans were prepared for defense and their garrisons reinforced.

The plan for 1771 developed by the Military Council of Russia provided for the development of hostilities, this time mainly in the Crimea. In other areas, it was planned to consolidate the successes of the previous campaign. The main blow to the Crimea was to be delivered by the 2nd Army under the leadership of the newly appointed general V. M. Dolgoruky. Rumyantsev's 1st Army was ordered to prevent the Turkish troops from forcing the Danube.

By that time, the Turks had 120,000 troops in the Balkan theater, and the Russians had 45,000.5 to keep the Turkish troops in constant tension. His plan succeeded. In a short time, the 1st Army captured a number of fortresses (Tulcha, Isakcha, etc.), and the attempt of the Turks to cross the Danube and build on success was thwarted. In autumn, Russian troops took Machin, Girsovo and Zhurzha.

In the Crimean theater, the 2nd Army occupied all the important strategic points and forced the Turkish forces to leave the peninsula. The capture of the Crimea was of great strategic importance, since it was possible to eliminate the threat of enemy attacks on the flank and rear of the troops operating in the Balkans and the Caucasus. But that's not all: favorable conditions have developed for the creation of the Black Sea Fleet.

Turkey, having been defeated on the Danube and in the Crimea, was forced to agree to a truce. Negotiations continued until March 1773. In April, Turkey again opened hostilities. Rumyantsev suggested that the Military Council continue to conduct active defense, inflicting separate blows on the enemy, and thus prepare a general offensive. But he was ordered to advance. Not possessing sufficient forces for a broad offensive, the Russian troops nevertheless developed

Military strategy of the Russian Empire in the 18th century. 65

active actions expressed in the search. The search for the detachment of A.V. Suvorov was the most successful. But no decisive strategic success was achieved this year.

The failure of the 1773 campaign had a sobering effect on the War Council. Rumyantsev received freedom of action. The new campaign plan worked out by Rumyantsev pursued one goal - to force Turkey to make peace. Rumyantsev decided to transfer his main forces beyond the Danube, and already there inflict strong blows on the field army of the Turks. Part of the troops was supposed to block the Turkish garrisons in the fortresses. Having a 55,000-strong army, Rumyantsev allocated 10,000 for the blockade of Ruschuk and 12,000 for Silistria. The divisions of M.F. Kamensky and A.V. Suvorov, numbering 24 thousand people, Rumyantsev moved in the direction of Shumla against the troops of the Grand Vizier! 6.

The offensive of the Russian army began in April 1774 and proceeded very successfully. The most significant clash occurred near Kozludzha, where Suvorov won a major victory. The defeat greatly affected the morale of the Turks. And then there's Saltykov's division smashed their strong detachment near Turtukai. The plight of the Turkish troops blocked in the fortresses, as well as the appearance of Russian detachments in the Balkans, forced the Grand Vizier to start peace negotiations, which ended with the Kuchuk-Kainarji peace. Russia received Kerch, Azov, Yenikale, Kinburn and a significant territory between the Dnieper and the Bug, and in the Caucasus - Small and Big Kabarda. Crimea was recognized as independent from Turkey.

Russian-Turkish war 1768-1774 contributed a lot to the development of the national military strategy, and great merit in this belongs to the outstanding commander P. A. Rumyantsev. Rumyantsev believed that military strategy should proceed from the political and strategic situation, taking into account the forces and means of the opposing sides. In his military-theoretical works, he emphasized that military power depends on the state of the country's economy, argued the need for "proportionate to the way of one's income to take up arms" and at the same time "highly respect their source, which we are still alone in the content of military affairs we have: I mean the people, giving for the army and people, and money! 7.

In the development of strategic plans, Rumyantsev put the relationship of policy and strategy in the first place, but, in his opinion, it is necessary to proceed from the totality of conditions. He viewed war as a phenomenon arising from the political interests of the state, but emphasized the priority of politics. In accordance with this, he sought to direct the efforts of the army into the mainstream of the requirements of politics, for, in his words, politics gives "rules to the military."

Rumyantsev strongly advised abandoning the cordon strategy. The only way, he believed, to achieve a solution of strategic issues was not fruitless maneuvering, not a siege of fortresses, but a field battle. Rumyantsev's brilliant victories at Larga and Cahul were indisputable proof of the correctness of his conclusions. Rumyantsev was one of the first to create elements of a decisive offensive strategy. In contrast to the Western military doctrines of that time, he defined the defeat of the enemy army as the main goal. In his opinion, only strategic purposefulness and actions by concentrated forces can bring victory.

At the same time, Field Marshal Rumyantsev always paid tribute to the correct balance of offensive and defensive. With a lack of forces and means, he organized an active defense, and under favorable conditions, he switched to a decisive offensive in the main direction. Nevertheless, the field marshal never saw the offensive as simply moving forward. In his military leadership (and in this he was unique) decisiveness, foresight and caution were combined.

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nom. "I certainly stand by the rule that without securely securing what is left behind, one cannot take big strides forward," he wrote.

With extremely weak means of communication, Rumyantsev showed examples of command and control in the theater of operations. In most cases, he managed to control the troops, regroup them and subordinate them to a single strategic goal. By his actions in this field, he approved the priority of Russia's military strategy.

In the late 1980s, the Black Sea basin continued to be a knot of sharp contradictions. England, which met with hostility the successes of Russia's foreign policy in this region, sharply increased pressure on Turkey. Turkey, seeking to restore its lost monopoly position in the Black Sea, demanded Russia's rejection of the Kuchuk-Kainarji Treaty, the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Crimea and Georgia, and the establishment of control over Russian ships passing through the Mediterranean through the straits. Austria became a temporary ally of Russia. She had her own goal: to use the power of Russia to weaken Turkey's position in the Balkans.

The contradictions between Turkey and Russia were constantly growing and finally resulted in a new Russian-Turkish war (1787-1791). It began in difficult conditions for Russia: Prussia and France took a rather hostile position, Sweden was preparing to enter the war against Russia, having concluded an alliance with Turkey. Türkiye has developed a strategic war plan based on the superiority of its fleet. His main task is to capture the Crimea, and then the Caucasus. It was decided to first strike at Kinburn and Kherson, and then at Sevastopol. According to the Turkish command, this strategic plan did not require large ground forces. They were supposed to deploy only during the war.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the process of building up military power actively continued in Russia. The size of the army increased, the number of rangers in the infantry increased, the material part of artillery was improved, the construction of the Black Sea Fleet was in full swing. The Sevastopol squadron already numbered 23 warships with 864 guns and a crew of about 5 thousand people. The Dnieper squadron of the river flotilla had 20 ships, though not yet armed! And yet Russia was not fully prepared for war. Only during its

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formation of two armies - Yekaterinoslav (75 thousand people) and Ukrainian 40 thousand people). In addition to them, the Kuban and Crimean corps were preparing for combat operations.

The military-political leadership of the war was now carried out in Russia somewhat differently than in previous campaigns. There was no Conference, no Military Council. Field Marshal G. A. Potemkin, Commander of the 1st Yekaterinoslav Army, exercised general command of the land and sea forces. The strategic plan adopted by Potemkin provided for the defense of the Crimea and the Kinburn-Kherson region, as well as the deployment of active operations in the Kuban and in the region of the river. Rod.

In the campaign of 1787, the Turkish command intended to land troops on the Kinburn Spit, capture the Kinburn fortress, and then capture Kherson and destroy the Russian shipyards. Subsequently, it was planned to land a large landing in the Crimea with the task of striking Sevastopol from land!?. In a word, for the Russians, the defense of the Crimea and the Kinburn-Kherson region acquired strategic importance. Field Marshal Potemkin instructed Suvorov to organize and conduct it.

Suvorov focused on strengthening the Kinburn Spit, located just opposite Ochakov, the main stronghold of Turkey on the northern coast of the Black Sea. The Turkish fleet was based here and there were significant ground forces. With his characteristic perspicacity, Suvorov unraveled the enemy's Turkish plan. In letters to Potemkin, he argued that if the Sevastopol squadron

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Scheme 8. Russian-Turkish war of 1787-1791.

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when attacked, he will defeat the Turkish fleet, then the danger of an enemy invasion will be completely eliminated. Moreover, Ochakov itself will be blockaded from the sea, and the presence of Russian troops already concentrated in southern Ukraine will become a major factor of strategic importance'?. In fact, in addition to a deep comprehensive analysis of the strategic situation, the letters contained the right decision for the future, which testified to his military leadership talent.

In contrast to the methods of conducting passive defense generally accepted at that time, Suvorov organized active defense everywhere. That Kinburn went down in history as an outstanding example of such a defense!?. The Turks landed at Kinburn. In October, Russian troops led by Suvorov inflicted a severe defeat on them. The campaign of 1787 ended with military actions near Kinburn. Suvorov's successful actions near Kinburn acquired strategic importance. The plan of the Turks was frustrated, the necessary time was won to intensify military operations against the Turkish bases, which threatened the Russian army and navy, primarily against Ochakov.

In the campaign of 1788, Russia was able to field about 100,000 people against Turkey in the European theater of war. Austria, which declared war on Turkey in January, deployed an army of more than 120,000 people on its border!?. These forces were quite enough for large-scale actions. However, due to the indecision of the Austrian government, the active army was stretched like a cordon along the border with Turkey - from the Dniester to the coast of the Adriatic Sea, which doomed the Austrians to passive actions.

The position of Russia became more complicated in connection with the entry into the war of Sweden. The outbreak of hostilities forced the Russian government to keep the Baltic Fleet in the Gulf of Finland, and to defend St. Petersburg to concentrate significant forces. The opponents got their way: Russia had to fight in two theaters at the same time,

In the south, the main content of the campaign was reduced to the struggle for Ochakov. It was impossible to take possession of it without the successful actions of the Russian fleet. The Sevastopol squadron under the command of Admiral M. And Voinovich proceeded to active operations. On June 29, the Russian and Turkish squadrons met near the island of Tendra. The Turkish squadron tried to evade the battle. Voinovich's decision was unequivocal - to pursue her. The vanguard of the Sevastopol squadron under the command of F.F. Ushakov on July 3 overtook the Turks near the island of Fedonisi. Ushakov, using a concentrated strike against the main forces of the enemy fleet, won the battle even before the main forces of the squadron approached.

The victory won under the leadership of Ushakov made it possible to block Ochakov from the sea. On December 5, the fortress was taken, which changed the strategic situation throughout the theater. The Russian army and navy could now solve more complex tasks in the Balkans.

The unsuccessful campaigns of 1787 and 1788 forced Turkey to concentrate about 150 thousand people in the Balkans and transfer the main naval forces from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. The Russian army, with 70 thousand people, was located along the Dniester and the Prut. Austrian troops - mainly in Transylvania, only the 18,000th corps of Coburg was in the area of military operations. Suvorov's division was assigned to communicate with the Austrian troops.

Given the location of their opponents, the Turks decided to strike at the junction of the Russian and Austrian armies, and then, having separated them, smash them one by one. But Suvorov, who paid great attention to continuous deep military and even undercover reconnaissance, established in a timely manner that the main Turkish forces were concentrated not in Izmail, as Potemkin believed, but near Focsani. Understanding what a dangerous position the Russian army could be in, Suvorov persistently seeks permission.

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decision to advance on Focsani in order to disrupt the enemy's offensive. While correspondence between Suvorov and Potemkin continued, the Turks went on the offensive and began to push the Austrians.

The Austrian command requested urgent assistance. At the head of a 7,000-strong detachment, Suvorov moved to

Pokshnam and overcame a small march of 60 km in 28 hours. It was one of the famous Suvorov crossings.

Before the attack of the superior enemy, Suvorov gave the order: "The troops act at two in the morning in three columns, the Russians make up the middle one. Attack the enemy with all your might, without doing small searches, to the right and left, in order to arrive at the river at dawn. Putna, which and go, continuing the attack. They say that there are fifty thousand Turks in front of us, and another fifty - further; it is a pity that they are not together, it would be better to end them at once!?. In the battle of Focsani, Suvorov won a brilliant victory, demonstrating his military talent. He not only unraveled the enemy's plan, but also carried out a sudden counterattack. The plan he developed was based on the idea of a decisive offensive. The battle of Focsani dramatically changed the strategic situation. However, Commander-in-Chief Potemkin, who still thought that the main danger came from Ishmael, did not use the results of Suvorov's victory. The mistake of the field marshal allowed the Turkish command to complete the crossing of its main forces across the Danube without interference. Now in the Izmail region they had 30 thousand people, and in the Brailov region - another 100 thousand.

By imitating an offensive from the side of Ishmael, the Turks sought to divert Potemkin's attention in order to bypass the Russian troops with their main forces, and then, having successively defeated the Austrian army and Suvorov's corps, strike at the main forces of the Russian army. But again this plan was thwarted. Having united 7,000 Russian troops and 8,000 Austrian troops under his command, Suvorov, using strategic surprise, swiftly attacked the 100,000th army of the Turks in the area of the river. Rymnik and completely defeated them. He brilliantly carried out the strategic plan developed for the summer of 1789. It was based on delivering a crushing blow in the main direction with the aim of destroying the main enemy grouping and then occupying the entire territory up to the Danube. Suvorov had to implement his plan in difficult conditions. In the presence of insignificant forces and means, he was limited in freedom of action.

Suvorov's brilliant victory in the area of the river. Rymnik, the successes of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea dramatically changed the situation in the Balkans in favor of Russia. But Potemkin again did not use the results of the victory, although there was a brilliant opportunity to develop this success into a general strategic offensive. He limited himself to the occupation of Bender. True, then the Russians took the Gadzhibey fortress. It was there that the city of Odessa was founded.

Thus, in the campaign of 1789, the new way of warfare collided with the old. Most of the Russian army, led by the commander-in-chief, in the old traditions of cordon strategy, "besieged fortresses and took fortresses, while Suvorov, with a small army, first defeated a strong detachment of the Turks, and then their main army in a general battle"! 2.

Despite the impressive successes achieved in 1789 in the Balkans, Russia's international position became increasingly tense. Hostile England and Prussia forced Austria to withdraw from the war and in 1790 conclude a separate peace with Turkey. It was difficult to continue the war in two theaters without Russia's allies. Only in August 1790 Sweden withdrew from the war after a series of defeats. Turkey could be forced to stop the war only by winning a convincing victory.

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Russia offered Turkey to make peace, but she refused. Potemkin decided to move his efforts beyond the Danube. But first it was necessary to take possession of Izmail - a powerful fortress with a garrison of 35,000, which occupied an important strategic position in the lower reaches of the Danube. However, the campaign undertaken by the commander-in-chief was not distinguished by decisiveness.

At this time, the Black Sea Fleet achieved significant success. Admiral Ushakov inflicted a number of major defeats on the Turkish fleet. The victories of Russian sailors at Sinop, in the Kerch Strait and Gadzhibey allowed the Russian fleet to seize the strategic initiative. Now he practically controlled the entire Black Sea basin.

The victories of the Russian fleet were also important for the successful military operations of the army. Under the cover of Ushakov's squadron, X de Ribas' rowing flotilla entered the Danube. Having defeated the Turkish flotilla, she completed the blockade of Ishmael, interrupting his communications along the Danube. || On December 1789, during the assault, in the preparation and conduct of which Suvorov again played a decisive role, Izmail was taken. The entire left bank of the Danube was now in the hands of the Russians. The way to the Balkans was open.

The assault on Ishmael and the victories won by the Russian fleet at sea decided the outcome of the war. According to the treaty of Jassy concluded in 179], Turkey confirmed the conditions of the Kuchuk-Kainarji peace, recognized the annexation of Crimea to Russia and a new border with it along the Dniester.

During the Russian-Turkish war of 1787-1791. domestic military strategy received a new impetus in its development. First of all, this is due to the name of the outstanding Russian commander Suvorov. Continuing to creatively develop the provisions developed by Field Marshal Rumyantsev, Suvorov put them into practice and achieved a number of brilliant victories over the Turkish troops, thereby proving the superiority of Russian military art. In his famous instruction "The Science of Victory" Suvorov summarized the best practices of the Russian army. In the war of 1787-1791. Russian military art was enriched with new experience of strategic interaction between the army and navy.

The Russian military strategy was further developed in the war with France (1798-1799), in which Russia participated as part of the second anti-French coalition. Russian troops had to operate in a very remote theater of war from the mother country - in Northern Italy and Switzerland. This is definitely negative.

affected their actions. Nevertheless, Russia honorably fulfilled its allied obligations.

The Russian armed forces in the last years of the 18th century, when Paul reigned [(1796-1801), experienced a number of upheavals. His rule like a devastating hurricane swept over the Russian army, breaking and ruining a lot of what she inherited from Rumyantsev and Suvorov. Immediately after accession to the throne, this adherent of the Prussian watch parade transferred 132 Gatchina officers loyal to him to the guard to key posts. The “exercise direction” prevailed in the army, which was based on the position that the soldier is a mechanism provided for by the article. The former principles, which put above all duty, honor, the personal example of an officer, were replaced by intimidation. As a result, the Russian army in almost all respects was thrown back half a century ago. Admiration for the reactionary Prussian military system and its blind copying had disastrous consequences, primarily for the combat training of the troops. Retraining in the Prussian way, the army was losing the precious experience it had acquired in the wars of the second half of the 18th century. In other words, the army was completely disoriented.

After the French Revolution (1789-1793), the young French Republic sharply intensified its foreign policy, aimed both at

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expansion of territorial boundaries, and the capture of colonies, important markets. The Republican army, led by Napoleon Bonaparte, became the most advanced and efficient army in Western Europe. It was favorably distinguished by the skillful application of methods of warfare, new for that time, born in the course of the bourgeois revolution. The republic's military strategy was based on decisive offensive actions against the enemy's field army, and their dominant feature was the defeat of the enemy in a pitched battle.

The main author of these innovations was Napoleon Bonaparte. The French troops in a short time mastered the actions in columns in combination with the loose formation, which, of course, gave in the course of the battle undeniable advantages over opponents who continued to practice long-obsolete linear tactics. On the battlefield, the French army was distinguished by mobility, and on marches, by speed. The presence of young and capable military leaders in Napoleon's entourage allowed him to successfully introduce innovations in military art into practice, and at the same time in various theaters of military operations. All this made it possible in the first years of the revolution to defend the young republic in the course of defensive wars. Feeling that military power had grown rapidly, inspired by the first victories, France transferred its military operations outside the state.

French expansion was directed to the east. Napoleon's Italian campaign ended with the capture of Northern Italy. Then, having occupied the Ionian Islands and the Adriatic coast, Napoleon prepared a new springboard for an offensive against Austria and Turkey. His next step was the Egyptian campaign, which posed a threat not only to Turkey, but also to the possessions of England. However, he also affected the interests of Russia, since in the future the possibility of the appearance of France in the Black Sea loomed.

Türkiye turned to Russia, Austria and England for help. In 1798, an agreement was signed between these powers. As a result, a second anti-French coalition was created. In accordance with the treaty, Russia undertook to field a 65,000-strong army for joint operations in the land theater with Austria, 2 squadrons for operations with England in the Baltic Sea, and a squadron for joint operations with Turkey and England in the Mediterranean. Austria pledged to field about 225,000 men. England limited itself to naval forces!8.

Nevertheless, the allies did not have a general coalition plan for the war with France. While they were concentrating their forces, the troops of the Directory went on the offensive and inflicted a series of defeats on the Austrian troops, clearing Switzerland and all of northern Italy of them.

Military operations unfolded in the Mediterranean. The Russian squadron under the command of Ushakov carried out a number of brilliant amphibious landing operations in the area of the Ionian Islands, including on the island of Corfu!?. The widespread use of amphibious assault forces by the fleet was a significant contribution to the development of Russian military art.

Despite the successes in the Mediterranean basin, the military-strategic situation for the allies by the middle of 1799 was unfavorable. The fact is that the troops of the French Republic began to threaten directly Austria itself, while the 86,000-strong Austrian army of Melas was in the northeastern part of Italy. The Austrian and British governments, convinced of the impossibility of successful actions against the troops of France, turned to Paul [with an urgent demand to appoint the invincible Suvorov at the head of the allied forces. At the same time, it was meant to use his military genius, and at the same time the Russian army and navy in their own interests. April 5, 1799 Suvorov took command. The famous Italian campaign began.

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However, already at the very beginning of the campaign, political contradictions were revealed within the coalition, fundamental differences were revealed in the approach to the most important issues of military strategy. The Austrian gofkriegsrat (headquarters) tried to impose on Suvorov a plan for the methodical expulsion of the French troops, based on the principles of cordon strategy. The Russian commander resolutely refused to be guided by them. Even earlier, in 1797, when evaluating the course of hostilities in Europe, he sharply criticized the cordon strategy of Austria and England. In a letter to the Russian ambassador in Vienna A. K. Razumovsky dated February 27, Suvorov assesses the situation as follows: “Bonaparte is concentrating. Gof-Krings-Rect wisely covers it from the pole to the equator. Disintegration does glorious, weakening the mass! 5.

The dogmas of the cordon and maneuver strategy of the Austrian and British generals were opposed by the Russian commander with a completely new strategic concept. The main thing in it is to achieve the mobility of the masses of troops, the concentration of forces in the chosen direction, and the conduct of a decisive offensive. Suvorov insisted on achieving the defeat of the main enemy forces in field battles, choosing the forms of struggle without any prejudice, but in accordance with the situation!! He had a clear idea of the political and strategic goals of the coalition members. While still in exile, he foresaw the development of events and formulated the main provisions of the strategy in case of a war with France: “1. Nothing but advance. 2. Speed in campaigns, swiftness, ardor in attacks. 3. Methodism is not needed - a good eye. 4. Full power to the general-in-chief (commander - Ed.). 5. Attack and beat the enemy in an open field. 6. Don't waste time in sieges... take mainly fortresses by storm or open force. In this case, the losses are less. Never divide forces to guard different points ... The enemy bypassed them - so much the better; it is fit to be beaten... Never burden yourself with fruitless maneuvers, counter-marches, or so-called tricks of war, which are suitable only for poor academics... Luxembourg; advance its point with uninterrupted fighting all the way to Paris as the main point”!3?.

Suvorov, true to his principle of "embracing everything with one look"!3, in developing a plan for the upcoming campaign in Italy, weighs and takes into account all the factors that characterize the situation not only in Italy, but also in Switzerland and in the Mediterranean basin.

Arriving at the theater of operations, Suvorov was convinced of the correctness of his preliminary conclusions: only a decisive offensive in Northern Italy could bring success to the allies. In his opinion, first of all, it was necessary to capture Lombardy and Piedmont, which made it possible to create a base for an attack in the direction of Lyon, Paris. He believed that a decisive offensive in northern Italy, and then on Paris, should be carried out simultaneously with the offensive in Switzerland, southern Germany and Belgium. Led by Suvorov in the battle in the area of the river. Adda, the allied Russian-Austrian army of 48.5 thousand people defeated the army of J. Moreau, and then occupied all of Northern Italy in almost 6 weeks. The French armies of Generals J. MacDonald and J. Moreau in June tried to encircle and destroy the allied army with enveloping blows. But in the battle near the river. Grebbiya Suvorov dealt MacDonald's army such a strong blow that Moreau, fearing to share his fate, retreated. In August, Russian-Austrian troops under the command of Suvorov defeated the combined French army of B. Zhuberau Novi. As a result of these victories, as well as Ushakov's successful Mediterranean campaign, Italy was liberated from French rule. During this campaign, Suvorov applied new forms of command and control of troops in the theater of war.

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actions. Moreover, the independent actions of individual groups of troops performing private tasks were aimed at solving the general plan of the commander.

Suvorov's campaign, in terms of the pace of the offensive, and most importantly, in terms of its results, turned out to be much more effective than Bonaparte's Italian campaign. Russia once again proved to the world that the military art of the Russian army is the most advanced, that Suvorov has no equal among military strategists.

After the liberation of Northern Italy, Suvorov's troops were sent to Switzerland in order to join the Russian corps of A. M. Rimsky-Korsakov and the Austrian troops there, to launch an offensive against

France. However, it turned out that the Austrian command provides only a small part of its troops. In addition, the threat of being defeated by the French army of General A. Massena loomed over the Russian-Austrian troops. Suvorov decided to break through to his own shortest route through the Alps, that is, to the rear of the French troops, and this, of course, they did not expect at all. Having mastered the Saint Gotthard Pass, the troops under the leadership of Suvorov crossed the Devil's Bridge. When approaching Lake Lucerne, it turned out that the enemy did not leave any suitable crossing facilities, and Rimsky-Korsakov's corps was defeated in the battle near Zurich. Suvorov decided to turn east. The Russian troops, surrounded by three times the enemy forces, having a limited amount of ammunition and food, fought through a number of passes and finally reached the territory of Austria, thus avoiding the inevitable defeat.

So, created by Peter [the regular army of Russia in numerous wars, battles and campaigns of the eighteenth century. almost always and everywhere won brilliant victories. This was the result of high combat training, skill and, of course, the courage of Russian soldiers. The Russian army, led by outstanding commanders, demonstrated the highest level of military art. Much has been brought forward both in the theory and in the practice of military strategy.

Throughout the eighteenth century A Russian military-theoretical school was formed, the foundation of which was laid by Peter G. Later it was developed by Rumyantsev, and the most vivid and profound expression by the great Suvorov. Long before Clausewitz, it was they who formulated in theory and then put into practice the connection between war and politics: once the war has been started, everything should be directed towards its successful end. Moreover, an indispensable condition is active actions, taking into account the nature of the war, the characteristics of the enemy and the terrain. The main thing in the war was the defeat of the enemy's manpower. As the commanders believed, the implementation of this task was achievable only by decisively defeating the enemy in a field battle.

The offensive was considered the main type of military operations in the Russian military strategy of that time. If the situation forced them to go over to the defensive, then it was used to create the conditions necessary for a subsequent transition to the offensive. The fate of the war, in accordance with the Russian strategic views of the 18th century, could be determined only by a general battle, which was considered as the culmination of the entire campaign. The main task is to destroy the enemy army.

In the last years of the eighteenth century. Suvorov developed this position, approaching a new way of solving strategic problems. Thus, in the campaign of 1799, he used a system of several successive strikes aimed at destroying enemy forces one by one. Such a system of actions required the commander to skillfully choose the enemy grouping that needed to be defeated in the first place; the skillful application of a maneuver that ensured the concentration of forces and means in a decisive direction; strategic and tactical surprise After the defeat

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Scheme 10. Suvorov's Swiss campaign in 1799

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Suvorov considered it necessary to capture the economic and political centers of the country. This Suvorov strategy was ahead of its time. In fact, it anticipated the strategy of mass armies, adopted only in the next century.

5. Development of domestic military strategy in the twentieth century.

VHIH c. There are three distinct stages in the development of Russia's military strategy. The first (at the beginning of the century) was the further improvement of the advanced provisions developed by Rummyantsev and Suvorov. The second (mid-century) is not only a departure from them, but also oblivion. The third (second half of the century) is an attempt to revive the best principles of Russian military strategy.

The first decade of the 20th century passed in Europe under the sign of the military genius of Napoleon. France, as a result of successful actions against the forces of the second coalition in 1800, forced to withdraw from the war and conclude the Luneville

peace was first with Austria, and two years later the Peace of Amiens was concluded by England. Naturally, with their withdrawal from the war, the coalition fell apart. The established peace turned out to be, however, very fragile. It soon became clear that Napoleon was striving for dominance over Europe, that his aggressive plans affected the interests of all European countries, including Russia.

The main content of Russia's foreign policy at the beginning of the century was the struggle against the aggressive tendencies of Napoleon and the struggle for the establishment of legitimism in Europe. It embodied its policy in the course of a number of wars: Russia's wars with Napoleon as part of coalitions (1805 and 1806-1807), with Iran (1804-1813), Sweden (1808-1809) and Turkey (1806-1812)! 3* were a single set of events that ended with the Patriotic War of 1812.

The allied forces of the anti-French coalition, both in 1805 and in 1806-1807, could not offer worthy resistance to Napoleon's army. One of the reasons is the lack of a common command of all the troops that acted against him. In addition, in the war of 1805 from the third coalition, which included England, Austria, Russia, Sweden and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, actually only Austria and Russia conducted hostilities. . Moreover, Austria had almost 300 thousand people, and Russia was able to field only about 100 thousand, and even then dispersed in different regions. Near the border with Austria, one army of M. I. Kutuzov was stationed, numbering 50 thousand people! \$.

Strategically, the coalition plan developed by the Austrian headquarters was based on the principles of cordon strategy, long outdated. Napoleon opposed his opponents with a strategy based on maneuver in the theater of war, strategic bypass of the flanks, and the desire to decide the fate of the campaign in one general battle. Having defeated the enemy, he completed his work by strategic pursuit. This allowed Napoleon to win a number of major victories. After the defeat at Austerlitz

the third coalition broke up.

In the battle of Austerlitz, all the viciousness of the maneuvering strategy and linear tactics that the allies adhered to, primarily Austria, was revealed. At the same time, the war of 1805 showed that Napoleon had a worthy opponent in the person of Kutuzov. The Russian commander, continuing the best domestic traditions, sought and found new forms of warfare in the new conditions.

The following year, England and Prussia formed another coalition against Napoleon. It was joined by Russia, Sweden and Saxony. The uncoordinated actions of the allies led to the fact that their forces were not gathered into a single fist. Napoleon, who was closely watching their actions, decided to suddenly cross the Prussian border.

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these, to defeat first the Prussian and then the Russian armies. He defeated the Prussian army in six weeks.

Prussia was defeated by the forms of strategy and tactics, as if frozen since the time of Frederick II, the limited military thought, the unpreparedness of its army to solve strategic problems. And the general battle strategy used by Napoleon, together with the tactics of columns and loose formation, fully justified itself. In the battles near Jena and Auerstedt, Napoleon demonstrated an example of the defeat and strategic pursuit of the enemy.

Now Russia remained the only opponent of Napoleon. However, at that time she was still at war with Iran and Turkey. All this, of course, greatly complicated the position of Russia. In 1806-1807. Napoleon fought with Russia. In this war, the confrontation between the Russian and French armies on the territory of East Prussia convinced Napoleon that he was facing a strong enemy. This time he failed to implement the strategy of a general battle, that is, to finish off the Russian army with one blow, neither in the battle of Pultusk, nor near Preussisch-Eylau. During the entire campaign, he won a single battle near Friedland, which, however, determined the outcome of the struggle: the coalition suffered another defeat. The Treaty of Tilsit was concluded, according to which France further strengthened its position in Europe.

One of the reasons for the unsuccessful actions of Russia was that Napoleon forced her to fight simultaneously on three fronts - in the Caucasus, in the Danube region and in East Prussia, which, of course, greatly weakened the Russian troops in the decisive sector of the struggle. Although the concluded peace was unfavorable for Russia, she had to take into account the possibility of successfully ending the war in the south! The failure of the Russian troops at Austerlitz and the well-established reputation of Napoleon as an invincible commander had an impact on the way it was conducted and the nature of military operations. Hence the caution in strategy and even timidity in carrying out the general plan of the war.

During the war against Turkey (1806-1812), Russian troops inflicted a number of defeats on its army in the Balkans and the Caucasian theaters, and in the Dardanelles and Athos battles, the Russian fleet defeated the Turkish fleet. The outcome of the war was decided by the defeat of the Turks by the Danube army under the command of Kutuzov in the battle of Ruschuk. Surrounded in the area of Slobodzeya, she was forced to capitulate.

The beginning, course of hostilities and their end were determined by the objectives of Russia's entire policy as a whole. The method of waging war was chosen on the basis of an analysis of the correlation of forces of the opposing sides. In this war, Russia did not have the opportunity to put up a sufficient number of forces to solve problems as quickly as possible, since her main forces were almost continuously engaged in more important theaters. The secondary importance of the Danube theater of war, with all the ensuing negative consequences, put the command of the Russian troops operating here in a difficult position. Even the military talent of the commanders, primarily Kutuzov, did not allow solving all the strategic tasks.

The wars of the first decade of the 19th century, in which Russia took part, were links in the general chain of events that steadily developed under the influence of aggravated international relations, mainly the strengthening of Napoleon's aggressive plans. The Necessity of Confronting Bonaparte's Forces

a sufficiently powerful army, which first of all corresponded to the new conditions, put on the agenda the issues of better organization of the armed forces of Russia.

In the field of military strategy, those features took shape that finally took shape in the Patriotic War of 1812. Kutuzov was, of course, the bearer and continuer of the advanced traditions of Russian military art. Although in the wars carried out during this period, the genius of Kutuzov has not yet been revealed in its entirety,

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it was already quite obvious that in his person Russia had a great strategist.

In the Patriotic War of 1812, Russia's military strategy reached another peak. On the eve of it, Napoleon became the sovereign master of Europe and made plans to conquer world domination. "In five years I will be master of the world; only Russia remains, but I will crush it," he confidently declared in 1811. '37 Russia turned out to be the main obstacle to Napoleon's world empire.

Long before the war of 1812, Napoleon made attempts to place Russia in a dependent position by weakening her economically and militarily. The fact is that one of the difficult conditions of the Tilsit Treaty was Russia's accession to the continental blockade of England. Since Great Britain was the main trading partner of Russia, the forced break with it led to a sharp reduction in the turnover of Russian foreign trade.

The political contradictions between France and Russia also escalated. Napoleon's policy aimed at the absorption by France of a number of small states in Europe reduced the prestige of Russia and affected the dynastic interests of the Russian imperial court. French policy in Poland caused particularly serious friction. Created under the terms of the Treaty of Tilsit, the Duchy of Warsaw was turned by Napoleon into a springboard for an attack on Russia. The anti-Russian orientation of French diplomacy on the eve of the war also intensified in the south, in Iran and Turkey. France provided a variety of assistance to Iran in the war against Russia, and helped the Turkish sultan in every possible way.

The aggravation of Franco-Russian relations manifested itself in the most unexpected way in the clash of interests between the two dynasties. When Napoleon decided to marry the emperor's sister Anna Pavlovna, Alexander [categorically refused to intermarry with HIM.

Thus, after Tilsit, Russian-French relations became so aggravated that war became inevitable. In November 1811, Alexander [wrote: "We ... are constantly on our guard: all the circumstances are so acute, everything is so strained that hostilities can begin any minute"!38.

Napoleon by that time already had huge resources. The armed forces of France, its subordinate states and allies reached by the beginning of 1812 1,187 thousand people. Of these, directly for the campaign in Russia, Napoleon formed a "great army". It numbered 608 thousand people, including 100 thousand non-combatants, with | 372 guns, as well as 156 thousand drill and supply horses!@.

The Russian army on the eve of the war was approximately 540 thousand. But for the conduct of hostilities in the west, it was able to concentrate only 210 thousand. The troops were brought together in three groups. The 1st Army under the command of General M. B. Barclay de Tolly (120,000 men, 550 guns) covered the St. Petersburg direction; The 2nd Army under the command of General P.I. Bagration (45-50 thousand people, 170 guns) concentrated on the Moscow direction; The 3rd Army under the command of General A.P. Tormasov (40 thousand people and 168 guns) was located in the Kiev direction. The northern borders were covered by the troops of the Narva Corps, the southern ones by the Danube Army and troops stationed in Transcaucasia!"6.

Napoleon for quite a long time developed a strategic plan for the war against Russia. It was based on a strategic offensive. Due to the rapid invasion of Russia, he intended to seize the initiative from the very first steps. Napoleon intended to deliver the main blow to Moscow. "If I take Kyiv, I will take Russia by the legs; if I take possession of Petersburg, I will take her by the head; having occupied Moscow, I will strike her in the heart," he said \ '. In his opinion, the attack on Moscow met the requirements of the political and strategic situation. With the goal of the complete conquest of Russia, Napoleon on the eve of the second

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On May 14, 1812, in a conversation with Archbishop Pradt of Micheln, he described his plan as follows: "I am going to Moscow, and in one or two battles I will finish everything. Emperor Alexander will be on his knees to ask for peace. I will burn Tula and disarm Russia. They are waiting for me there; Moscow is the heart of the empire; without Russia, the continental system is an empty dream"!?".

In turn, in Russia, already from 1810, plans for the upcoming war were being developed and considered. The initial plan for the war against Napoleon was prepared by the emperor's military adviser, General Fuhl. His recommendations boiled down to the following: "... retreating from one of the armies against which the main forces of the enemy are directed, from one large position to another, gradually weakening it, at the same time send our other army behind him." Ful proceeded from the fact that Napoleon would launch an offensive in the direction of Vilna or Grodno. Therefore, on the Western Dvina, near Drissa, a large fortified camp was created, relying on which the 1st Army was to hold the enemy from the front.

The 2nd Army, relying on the Borisov fortifications, was to act on the flank and rear of the enemy. In his plan, Ful essentially took what he wished for reality. The division of forces undertaken in accordance with it, obviously doomed them to limited actions, which was beneficial to Napoleon alone.

The content of the Russian strategic plan, according to which the troops in the face of a strong enemy were dispersed into separate groups, and on a broad front, corresponded to the main goal of Napoleon's plan: to crash between the divided Russian armies, prevent them from connecting and, holding them in pincers, destroy each separately.

In addition to the major strategic blunders in Ful's plan, a very important omission was the absence of a common high command. Alexander I, who exercised strategic leadership as the head of state, single-handedly gave all orders for the deployment of troops on the western border. However, the emperor did not give the order to join the high command of all the armies. In reality, the Russian armies were left without a single commander in chief.

Although they had been preparing for the war for a long time and were waiting for it, Napoleon's invasion of Russia turned out to be unexpected. On the night of July 12, the Napoleonic army crossed the border along three bridges built across the Neman, and invaded Russia without declaring war.

The unfavorable strategic position of the Russian troops, the superiority of the enemy in forces and means forced the Russian command to order the 1st and 2nd armies to retreat. For the troops, the first period of retreat, from Vilna to Smolensk, was especially difficult and difficult. Dismembered by large French forces, the 1st and 2nd Russian armies made a withdrawal at a great distance from each other.

The command of both armies sought to combine their efforts. The retreat of the Russians was accompanied by fierce rearguard battles, in which the French suffered heavy losses. On July 22, the armies finally united at Smolensk. This was the most important event in the first period of the war. Although the Russian troops covered more than 600 km in 38 days, they managed to save their main forces. Napoleon's intention to defeat the Russian army in a frontier general battle remained an unfulfilled dream!

On August 4-6, the Battle of Smolensk took place - one of the largest in the war of 1812. However, it did not develop into a general battle, as Napoleon wanted. The reason for this is that the command of the Russian army did not commit its main forces to the battle, realizing the need to preserve the army in the face of the enemy's clear superiority in strength. The battle of Smolensk was of great strategic importance, as it showed, on the one hand, the growing strength of resistance

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Russian army, and on the other hand, revealed a failure in Napoleon's calculations for a quick victory. Although large strongholds on the way to Moscow fell into the hands of the French, Napoleon did not achieve his main goal - to defeat the Russian army in one general battle.

It was at this time that the emperor appointed Field Marshal Kutuzov as commander-in-chief of all Russian troops. The army knew him as a student of Suvorov and an outstanding commander, and therefore accepted his appointment with glee. The arrival of a new commander-in-chief meant the application of a new strategic line, other than before, ways and means of deciding the fate of the war.

Even in St. Petersburg, before leaving for the troops, Kutuzov collected all the necessary information about the state of armament of the regular troops, about the militia and the total number of reserves. He arrives in the army with the intention of immediately proceeding to active operations, but, having clarified the situation on the spot in three days, he refuses the planned battle at Tsarevo-Zaimishche, where the Russian army was concentrated, and gives the order to retreat. The field marshal understood that it was possible to count on the success of the battle only if he replenished the army, which means equalizing the chances of victory. To deprive the enemy of numerical superiority by increasing the line of communication, to force Napoleon to allocate significant forces to cover it by active actions in the rear, to gain time to replenish his forces - such was the plan. "Having strengthened in this way ... I will surrender to the mercy of battle to save Moscow," Kutuzov reported to the emperor.

On September 7, the Battle of Borodino took place. Napoleon, who still followed his strategy, regarded this battle as a pitched battle. The Russian army (120,000 men and 640 guns), skillfully maneuvering its reserves, repelled a powerful frontal attack by the French (135,000 men and 587 guns). The damage inflicted on Napoleon's army seriously undermined the offensive capabilities of the enemy. The losses of the Napoleonic troops amounted to 38 thousand people, the Russians - 38.5 thousand. Kutuzov himself did not at all consider the battle of Borodino to be a general one. It was important for him to let Napoleon know that the Russian army did not intend to surrender Moscow without a fight. Not the last role was played by the need to maintain the confidence of the army in him. However, seeing that there was only one way to preserve a combat-ready army - by leaving Moscow, Kutuzov organized the withdrawal of troops in such a way that the Napoleonic principle "war feeds war" turned out to be unfeasible. During the retreat, Russian troops destroyed and took away all material and food supplies. Once in Moscow, Napoleon had to think more not about victory, but about the immediate conclusion of peace, about saving his army from decay and hunger. Three times he made Alexander I an offer to conclude peace, and all three times he was refused.

The Russian army retreated along the Ryazan road, but suddenly turned west, to Podolsk, then to Tarutino. At the same time, Kutuzov ordered part of the forces to retreat to Ryazan. This march-maneuver entered the history of the Patriotic War of 1812 under the name Tarutinsky. He is rightfully an achievement of Kutuzov's talent as a commander, for the Russian troops got the opportunity to break away from the enemy, and, having covered Kaluga, Tula and Bryansk, they forced Napoleon to abandon the plan to move his army to Petersburg.

Having camped in Tarutino, the Russian army began preparations for a counteroffensive. His goal was not to oust, but to exterminate Napoleon's army. After thorough and comprehensive preparation in material, military and moral terms, the Russian army moved on to active operations. Kutuzov planned the transition of the army to the counteroffensive as a series of consistent, purposeful actions. He is extremely skillful

chose the place and time for the strike. On October 6, Russian troops near the Chernishne River suddenly attacked Murat's troops. Strong blow of the 12 thousandth

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the Russian detachment literally knocked over 50 thousand Frenchmen. This battle was the first blow that hastened the transition of the main forces of the Russian army to a general counteroffensive.

Upon learning of the defeat of Murat's army, Napoleon decided to leave Moscow and make his way to Kaluga. The flight was hasty, but Napoleon tried to stage his retreat as if he were making an offensive maneuver in the direction of Kaluga. However, Kutuzov foresaw all further steps of the enemy and did not allow its implementation. The Russian army blocked the French way in the battle near Maloyaroslavets and forced them to retreat. Preempting Napoleon at Medyn, Kutuzov forced him to turn onto the devastated Smolensk road. In other words, Kutuzov creatively used the strategic initiative wrested from Napoleon to prepare a general counteroffensive, the main method of which was strategic pursuit. "I think to inflict the greatest harm on Napoleon by parallel pursuit and act on his operational path," the field marshal shared his thoughts.

Strategic pursuit, combined with battles and battles, as well as the active actions of partisan detachments organized by Kutuzov, had the goal not of ousting, but of completely destroying the enemy. To do this, the Russian troops inflicted continuous successive blows on the French. In operations near Maloyaroslavets and Vyazma, in the area of the village of Lyakhovo and near the river. Vop, in the area of the Solovyovskaya crossing and Dorogobuzh, near Smolensk and Krasnoye, Russian troops, together with partisans, destroyed most of the enemy forces.

In accordance with the exact calculation of Kutuzov, the part of Napoleon's army that survived the defeat near Krasnoye was completely surrounded near the river. Berezina It was on this river that the French army ceased to exist as a military force. The battle on the Berezina was the last stage of the Patriotic War of 1812. The further retreat of the once great army turned into a disorderly flight. By the beginning of December 1812, the Russian troops occupied Vilkomir, Vilna, Volozhin with their main forces, and individual units reached the Rossien-Kovno-Gniezno-Volozhin-Kovel line. From Vilna, Kutuzov wrote to the emperor: "The war ended with the complete annihilation of the enemy"!".

The Patriotic War of 1812 ended with the complete victory of Russia. In the struggle for national independence and state independence of Russia, the domestic military strategy improved qualitatively. In the person of Kutuzov, military theory inherited all the best that the Russian national military school had created since the time of Peter I, Rumyantsev and Suvorov. Kutuzov raised Russian military art to a new level.

The merit of Kutuzov also lies in his special foresight: he very accurately determined the strengths and weaknesses of Napoleon and his army. The field marshal comprehensively took into account the new conditions for waging war, which emerged as early as the beginning of the 20th century. Kutuzov put forward a military strategy based on a comprehensive consideration of all factors of war, the state of the armed forces, including the morale and combat qualities of the personnel. For the first time, the plan to defeat the enemy took the form of a counteroffensive against the general battle strategy professed by Napoleon, the Russian commander opposed a strategy based on the whole variety of forms of armed struggle: a strategic retreat combined with a system of separate

theater of war, active actions in secondary directions, active defense with subsequent transition to counteroffensive, strategic pursuit. For the first time in history, the actions of partisans were included in the general strategic plan of the war and took their rightful place in it.

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The Patriotic War of 1812, as well as foreign campaigns of 1813-1814. had a particularly great influence on the development of military-theoretical thought. Along with such Western military theorists as A. Bulow, A. Jomini, Archduke Karl, K. Clausewitz, G. Lloyd, Russian military thought struggled to resolve questions about the role of military science, the essence of military strategy, methods of conducting both war in general, and warfare in particular. In their works, I. G. Burtsev, F. N. Glinka, 11. I. Pestel, N. M. Muravyov characterized the concepts of “strategy” and “tactics” that strategy is the science of war as a whole, and tactics the science of combat. Much attention was paid to the development of questions about the connection between war and politics, the importance of the moral factor in war.

The reaction that set in in Russia after the defeat of the uprising on Senate Square on December 14, 1825, was reflected primarily in the army, and hence in military science. The theoretical views of A. Jomini were widely used in Russia. A participant in a number of Napoleonic wars, he transferred to the Russian service. Having received the support of official circles, Jomini in his writings exalted Napoleon's military strategy in every possible way and, on the contrary, kept silent about the experience of the Russian military school, as if forgetting about the innovative ideas of Suvorov and Kutuzov.

However, this does not mean that domestic military art did not develop at all. The works of N. V. Medem, D. A. Milyutin, N. D. Neelov, P. A. Yazykov, which were devoted precisely to the main problems of the theory of military strategy, serve as excellent confirmation of this. Among them, it is worth highlighting the works of Yazykov. Considering strategy the most important part of military-theoretical knowledge, he wrote: “Strategy, even in its incomplete scope, as it exists today, deserves special attention of enlightened people, because in terms of the importance of practical actions to which this theory is applied, it should occupy an important place. in the field of human knowledge» °. According to him, "strategy is the art of making the most advantageous use of armed forces in the theater of war in order to achieve a certain political goal"!

Further, Yazykov analyzes the relationship between politics and strategy. A number of provisions put forward by him testify to a deep understanding of the issue under consideration. "The aim of war," he pointed out, "is a political idea, is determined by political circumstances, consequently, politics gives the main direction to military operations"?. Yazykov singled out two directions in the theory of strategy: the first is "a set of strategic truths that precede consideration of the question of the use of armed forces in the theater of war"; the second is "a body of strategic truths pertaining to the consideration of the question of the use of armed forces in the theater of war." Under the first direction was meant the analysis of the basis for action, the objects of action, strategic points, the strategic properties of fortresses and fortified camps, strategic lines. The second direction was the characteristics of the theater, lines of operations (general and local), organization of the rear, supply of the army, command and control, the role and place of the battle, the significance of partisan actions in

Summing up, Yazykov noted: "The set of strategic concepts, if it is set out systematically and clearly, should correctly depict the position of the theory of strategy in its present development, giving time for the further development of science, because the theory of strategy should be improved and developed like all branches of human knowledge"⁵³.

In general, by the middle of the twentieth century. domestic military-theoretical thought has achieved serious success. Criteria were identified that necessitated

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scientific substantiation of the main provisions of the military strategy; trends in its further development are outlined. All this presupposed an active build-up of military-scientific research in the field of strategy, the widespread introduction of new ideas into the practice of preparing the state and the armed forces for future military operations. But for this, taking into account the new conditions, it was necessary to carry out major transformations of the entire military system of Russia. However, practice has shown something completely different. If we use modern terminology, we can say that during the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855) the state was in a state of stagnation. By the middle of the XIX century. Russia lagged far behind the Western European countries in many respects, but above all in the sphere of industry and militarily. While in Europe there was an active process of transition to mass armies, in Russia the recruiting system of troop recruitment remained unshakable, which, unlike military service, did not provide the armed forces with a sufficient contingent of trained reserve. In turn, the slow development of industry and production technology had a negative impact on the state and capabilities of military enterprises, which did not meet the needs of the army.

The situation with the production of weapons and ammunition was unsatisfactory. Difficulties of a financial nature did not allow the troops to be fully equipped with new primer and rifled guns-fittings. By 185] the number of fittings in the infantry did not exceed 4-5%! 5. And the artillery was not in the best condition. Its smooth-bore field and siege guns differed little from the artillery systems adopted in the army at the beginning of the 20th century.

The Russian naval forces were represented by the Baltic and Black Sea fleets, the Arkhangelsk, Caspian and Kamchatka flotillas. But basically the fleet was equipped with sailing ships, armed with the same smooth-bore artillery. And by the beginning of the Crimean War (1853-1856), there were only 15 combat steam ships! 55.

Appeared in the 30s of the twentieth century. railways could not significantly increase the military-economic level of Russia, since their construction progressed very slowly. By 1853 the country had only 986 versts of railroad tracks. In the south of Russia there was not a single railway track at all.

Major shortcomings in the military system of the Russian Empire certainly had a negative impact on the military strategy. Even the General Staff, the leading body of military-strategic leadership, as well as the Imperial Military Academy, established in 1832, did not become the "brain of the army", centers for the development of military art, capable of creatively reworking and introducing everything new in the field of military strategy. The samples of the Napoleonic strategy officially elevated to the military doctrine were planted in the Russian army.

The wars waged by Russia in the 1820s and 1840s had little effect on military strategy. It was believed that the Russian-Iranian (1826-1828), Russian-Turkish (1828-1829) wars, not to mention military operations in the Caucasian War (1802-1864), had a specific character due to the peculiarities of the theaters of war and the limited number of forces involved. That is why the corresponding conclusions that would influence the military strategy were not made. But their course, especially the Russo-Turkish war, as well as the preparations for it, revealed the urgent need for a transition from the recruitment system to military service. I had to conduct military campaigns with the troops that were available. The heavy losses incurred at the same time led to the fact that at the decisive moment Russia did not have the reserves to achieve a complete victory. Moreover, it turned out that the strategic plans turned out to be poorly supported financially: military factories were not ready to increase the production of weapons and ammunition.

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The wars once again confirmed the dependence of strategy on politics in general and on domestic politics in particular. It also became clear that the strategic plans for the war must be developed only taking into account the entire range of relations, both with the opposite side (Iran and Turkey), and with the numerous peoples who inhabited the Central Caucasus, Transcaucasia and the Balkans. The experience of these wars also showed the increased role of developing and implementing strategic cooperation not only between troops operating in various theaters of war, but also with the navy.

However, on the whole, official military-theoretical thought did not draw proper generalizations and conclusions from the experience of these small wars. By the middle of the century, the military strategy of Russia adhered to the same provisions as at the beginning of it. This was manifested with complete clarity in the Crimean War.

In the early 1850s, the Eastern question occupied a central place in Europe. While the Turkish Empire was torn apart by internal contradictions, the foreign policy aspirations of England, France and Russia intersected in the Middle East. While England and France sought to establish their dominance in this region, Russia traditionally continued to fight for the Black Sea straits through diplomacy, although it was not averse to strengthening its influence in the Balkans. The intense foreign policy struggle could not resolve the contradictions between the leading powers of Europe. A series of diplomatic blunders by Nicholas I led to the fact that almost all of Europe took up arms against Russia.

In the Crimean (Eastern) War that broke out in 1853, Russia had to resist a coalition of states consisting of England, France, Turkey and the Kingdom of Sardinia. Russia was able to put up an army of 700 thousand, and its opponents - almost 1 million people! "".

Russian troops were dispersed in various theaters of war. Because of the threat of intervention in the war by Austria, Prussia and Sweden, Russia was forced to keep a significant part of the army on its western border, and most of the fleet in the Baltic Sea. The unfavorable foreign policy situation forced us to abandon the active action plan and switch to passive defense. The strategic plan of Russia was not particularly specific, since attacks could be expected from everywhere, and therefore the troops had to be kept ready in all directions.

In fact, Turkey also did not have any clear-cut strategic plan. On the Danube, she maintained a defensive position. Active actions were planned mainly in the Caucasus, where the troops were tasked with capturing Transcaucasia. Then it was planned to go to the Central Caucasus, where the mountaineers of Shamil fought against the Russians!58.

England and France also did not have an agreed strategic plan. In this war, they were more concerned, however, as before, only their own interests. The lack of unity in goals led to disparate actions.

The war began with hostilities between Russia and Turkey. In the first year of the campaign, the Russian army under the command of General M. D. Gorchakov, consisting of 82 thousand people, conducted limited military operations in the Balkans against the Turkish army of Omer Pasha, numbering about 150 thousand people.

Events in the Caucasus unfolded differently. Russian troops repulsed the attempts of the Turkish army to launch an offensive against Alexandropol and Tiflis. The Turks were going to combine their actions with Shamil's speech. But after the defeat of the main forces of the Turkish troops in the battles near Akhaltsik and Bashkadiklar, Shamil changed his mind. Despite the failures in the Transcaucasus, the Turkish command

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nie did not leave attempts to seize the Caucasus. Having concentrated large forces at Sinop, it intended to land troops at Sukhum-Kale with the help of the fleet!?

The Russian fleet under the command of Vice-Admiral P.S. Nakhimov blocked the Turkish fleet in the northern ports and destroyed the Turkish squadron of Osman Pasha in the Sinop naval battle. This victory was of strategic importance. She thwarted the plan of the coalition command to land a large landing in the Caucasus.

Russia's victories on land and at sea revealed Turkey's military failure, which hastened the entry into the war of England and France. In the campaign of 1854, the Anglo-French fleet undertook extensive sabotage operations against Russian ports in the Baltic, Black, White, Barents Seas, as well as in the Pacific Ocean. However, all these disparate operations did not bring the expected success. The garrisons of Odessa, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, the Solovetsky Monastery, Gangut, although not numerous, gave a worthy rebuff to the enemy landings.

Having suffered a fiasco in various theaters, the Anglo-French command decided to concentrate their joint efforts in the Black Sea basin. In autumn, the main events unfolded in the Crimea, where an Anglo-French army of 62,000 men landed under the command of A. J. St. Arnaud and F. J. Raglan. Coalition troops on the river. Alma defeated the Russian army of A.S. Menshikov, which had 34 thousand people, and then blockaded Sevastopol. The Balaklava and Inkerman battles, as well as the heroism of the Russian garrison during the defense of Sevastopol, which was brilliantly led by Admirals V. A. Kornilov, P. S. Nakhimov and V. I. Istomin, forced the Anglo-French command to abandon attempts to take Sevastopol by storm . His long siege began.

Military operations continued in the Caucasus. In the battle near Kyuruk-Dara, an 18,000-strong Russian detachment defeated a 60,000-strong Turkish army. The missiles used by the Russians greatly affected the morale of the enemy! . Only the remnants of the Turkish troops took refuge in the fortress of Kars. And again, the hopes for Shamil were not justified. His attempt to capture Vladikavkaz failed. Moreover, Russian troops blocked it in the mountains.

In 1855, military operations were conducted in all theaters, including the waters of the Baltic and the Pacific Ocean, but the Crimea was still decisive. Despite the heroic struggle, the Russian troops, under pressure from superior enemy forces, were forced to leave Sevastopol. True, in the Caucasus, the corps of General A. I. Muraviev blockaded the Turkish garrison in Kars and forced it to capitulate. At the end of the year, hostilities virtually ceased.

On March 20, 1856, Russia signed the Treaty of Paris, according to which she lost the southern part of Bessarabia adjacent to the Danube and, consequently, ceased to be a Danubian power. This allowed Austria to almost completely monopolize shipping on the Danube. Russia lost the right to patronage over the Slavic peoples of the Balkans and the Danubian principalities. Henceforth, they were taken under their patronage by the European powers. Russia had to give up its protectorate over Orthodox Christians in Turkey, as a result of which the Russian official circles lost one of the most important means of influencing the Turkish government. The Black Sea was declared neutral and open to the merchant fleet of all countries. Russia was forbidden to have a navy there. The Treaty of Paris dealt a severe blow to her prestige. Russia's international influence in Europe and the Middle East has been undermined as never before.

The conclusions from the experience of the Crimean War were the foundation for a radical revision of the main provisions of the military doctrine of the state and its military strategy. No one doubted that a decisive restructuring of the entire military system, which had discredited itself during the war, was needed. The main conclusion was

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a mass army is needed, formed on the basis of a change in the system of manning troops, that is, the introduction of universal military service.

The second task, and no less important, was the rearmament of the army being created. For this, it was necessary to radically reform not only the military industry, but the entire economy of the state as a whole. The rapidly developing means of communication and transport raised the question of the areas of deployment of troops and their transfer to individual theaters of war in a new way. It is high time to create a wide network of strategic railways.

In previous strategic plans, both for the war as a whole and for individual campaigns, the connection between strategy and politics was poorly taken into account. Therefore, it is not surprising that during the Crimean War there was a clear discrepancy between the goals set and the capabilities that Russia had at its disposal. All strategic plans were built only on the basis of the existing contingent of troops. And the slow concentration and deployment of troops, their equally slow maneuvering in the theaters of war, was due to the lack of a sufficient number of vehicles. On top of everything, the high command, for the most part, turned out to be incapable of comprehending new forms of struggle, which did not allow the Russian army to successfully solve strategic tasks.

The war showed the insufficient preparation of the theaters of war in terms of engineering. Only two bases of the Baltic Fleet, Kronstadt and Sveaborg, turned out to be prepared for defense. All other sea fortresses were in an unsatisfactory condition. Essentially, any of Russia's maritime borders were open to invasion. Only thanks to the heroic actions of the garrisons was it possible to repel the enemy landings.

Finally, the war raised the question of reorganizing the bodies of strategic military leadership and restructuring the forms of command and control.

In order to eliminate Russia's military backwardness, military reforms were carried out in the 1960s and 1970s under the leadership of Minister of War D. A. Milyutin. Recruitment service was replaced by all-class military service. From now on, males who have reached the age of 21 were recruited to serve in the army. Service life in the ground forces was reduced from 20 to 6 years, in the navy - up to 9 years.

The law on conscription solved one of the main tasks of the reorganization of the army. He initiated the formation of a reserve of trained reserves and created the conditions for increasing the size of the army. The sources of recruitment of troops were expanded by almost 20%. By the beginning of the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. in the army, there were | 474,500 people, of which about 752,000 were in reserve, more than 722,000 were in service!

The system of military command and control has undergone cardinal changes. In fact, until now in Russia there was no single supreme military body capable of directing the development of the armed forces in accordance with the requirements of the situation. By 1868, it was possible to concentrate all command, military administrative and economic functions in the Ministry of War, i.e., to achieve the unity of the top leadership of the troops.

Thanks to the same Milyutin, a military district command and control system was introduced, 15 military districts were formed. Their creation made the command and control system of the armed forces more flexible, and most importantly, brought it closer to the troops. With the formation of military districts, and then provincial and district military administrations, the practice of drawing up mobilization plans was established, which ensured the rapid mobilization and deployment of the army in case of war. It became possible to carry out mobilization in 30-40 days instead of the previous 3-6 months! ?.

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In order to improve the command and control of troops during the period of hostilities, a new "Regulation on the field command and control of troops in wartime" was approved. In connection with the changes in tactics caused by the improvement of the means of combat (the rearmament of the army with rifled small arms and artillery), new regulations and instructions were developed. The whole system of officer training has changed. The cadet corps was transformed into military gymnasiums, and the network of military schools was expanded. For the training of officers from persons who did not have a secondary education, cadet schools were created. The military academies now paid more attention to the practical training of military specialists. Military judicial reform was carried out. Corporal punishment was abolished in the army. As a result of military reforms, the Russian army has become more modern, and its combat capability has increased significantly. Fundamental changes in the military system of the Russian state had the most positive impact on its military strategy. This was clearly manifested during the next Russian-Turkish war (1877-1878).

The major reforms of the 1960s and 1970s, in line with which military reforms were carried out, allowed Russia to significantly strengthen its economic and military power. Thanks to this, she was able to intensify her foreign policy, aimed primarily at resolving the Eastern issue. Russia needed to get rid of the shameful Paris Treaty. Not the last role was played by the desire to provide Russian ships with free access to the Mediterranean Sea, as well as to form independent states in the Balkans, completely freed from the Turkish yoke. Since Russia's interests in the Eastern question clashed with those of other great powers, the contradictions in the Balkans and the Middle East remained intractable.

In 1875-1876. Southern Slavs in the Balkans repeatedly raised national liberation uprisings against their conquerors. With incredible cruelty, they were all suppressed by the Turkish Sultan. In Russian society, a movement to help the rebellious brothers in blood and faith developed widely. In February 1877, the Russian government demanded that Turkey carry out some reforms in favor of the Slavic population of the Balkans. Türkiye, instigated by England, rejected Russia's proposals. On April 24, 1877, a manifesto on war with Turkey was announced in Russia.

The strategic plan for the war with Turkey was developed by General N. N. Obruchev. Realizing the complexity of the international situation, he proceeded from the fact that the war must be ended as soon as possible, that is, even before the European powers had time to send their forces to help the Sultan. The plan provided for the deployment of offensive operations in two theaters: the Balkan - the main and the Caucasian - auxiliary. The main goal of the Russian troops was to reach the Bosphorus and capture Istanbul. In order to accomplish such a task, it was supposed to cross the Danube as quickly as possible, and then part of the forces to operate in Northern Bulgaria, and the main grouping of the army to deliver a swift blow through the Balkan ridge. When choosing the direction of the main attack in the Balkan theater, political and strategic factors were taken into account. The Russian army, operating in the Caucasus, received the task of holding as many Turkish forces as possible in Anatolia, capturing Kars, Erzerum and Batum.

In general, Obruchev's plan, based on an analysis of the foreign policy and military-strategic situation, met the goals and objectives of the war. This is clear evidence that the Russian General Staff was able to raise its work to a level that met the new conditions of armed struggle.

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Scheme 14. Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. The general course of hostilities in the Balkans

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As early as March 1877, Russian troops destined for combat operations were concentrated in the Chisinau region. The army command planned in advance their transfer to neighboring Romania in marching order and by rail.

In the Balkans, the Danube army of 185 thousand people was opposed by the 206 thousand Turkish army. The Caucasian army of 75 thousand people fought against the Anatolian army of the Turks, which also numbered almost 75 thousand people. After crossing the Danube, Russian troops captured the fortresses of Lovcha and Plevna and, having occupied the Shipka Pass, repelled the counteroffensive of the Turkish army. In the Caucasus, the Russians occupied the fortresses of Bayazet and Ardagan. In the Avliar-Aladzhin battle, the Anatolian army was defeated, the Russians captured the fortress of Kars. In 1878, together with Serbia, which entered the war and with the assistance of the local population, the Russian army dealt a crushing blow to the Turkish army when crossing the Balkans, in battles near Sheinovo, Plovdiv and Adrianople. Finally, the Russians reached the Bosphorus and Istanbul. And in the Caucasus, at that time, the Russian army captured Batum and blockaded Erzerum. The war ended with the Treaty of San Stefano. The Russian-Turkish war contributed to the liberation of the Balkan peoples from the Turkish yoke, allowed them to create a national state, and ensured national independence for Romania, Serbia and Montenegro.

Russian-Turkish war 1877-1878 played a huge role in the development of domestic military strategy. In fact, it was the first war in which the Russian mass army took part, and therefore fundamentally new features can be traced in its preparation and conduct.

On the eve of the war, Russia carried out two mobilizations, as a result of which 372,000 soldiers and non-commissioned officers from the reserve were drafted into the army. The total number of the army was brought up to 1,548,432 people⁶³. Both mobilizations took place in a short time and ensured the rapid formation of corps, which was facilitated by the created military district system. During the war, the replenishment of the army continued. At the same time, even during the mobilizations, a significant shortage of officer cadres was revealed. So, according to mobilization plans, at least 6 thousand officers were required, but there was practically no reserve. Therefore, it was necessary to produce junkers and non-commissioned officers in officers, to make early graduations in military schools, to recruit retired officers! "".

For the first time, troops and supplies were concentrated in theaters of war with extensive use of railways. In accordance with the "Regulations on the management of military communications of the army and troops located behind its lines", the military department, although with great difficulty, was still able to concentrate in its hands the management of all private railways, to mobilize the rolling stock. Despite the difficulties, the plan to concentrate troops on the southwestern border of Russia was carried out with a delay of only a week! 5.

Although earlier military operations were unfolding in two theaters, now the Russian army in the Balkans was conducting combat operations on a front up to 240 km wide, and the depth of the offensive reached 400 km. The number of armies in the theaters of war increased. By the end of it, the Russian troops in the Balkans and the Caucasus had 630 thousand people, and more than | million people!. Such a scale of the struggle would not have been possible without coordination of the actions of the troops in several operational directions.

A new phenomenon in Russian military strategy was the forcing of a large water barrier, the river. Danube, organized and carried out on a strategic scale There is an interaction between the ground forces and the navy. Until the First World War

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None of the Western European armies managed to carry out anything like this. And overcoming the Balkan ridge in winter conditions on a front of up to 150 km overturned all the ideas of foreign military theorists about the impossibility of an offensive of this kind.

No less instructive is the experience of organizing the strategic pursuit of the enemy to a depth of 200-250 km by mobile cavalry vanguards, whose main goal was to complete the defeat of the Turkish army, quickly

capture important political and strategic centers of the enemy.

The war determined new directions in the development of command and control. On the agenda was the question of the full use of staffs, consisting of entire teams of officers and generals, to organize the continuity of command and control. Their activity would be impossible without new technical means of communication. New forms of struggle are unthinkable without commanders and commanders of a new type. The process of their selection went on throughout the war. D. A. Milyutin, N. N. Obruchev, I. V. Gurko, F. F. Radetsky, M. I. Dragomirov, M. D. Skobelev, and others especially distinguished themselves as major military leaders.

And in the last two decades of the twentieth century. the theory of military strategy in Russia did not stand still. In the works of G. A. Leer, A. N. Petrov, E. I. Martynov, P. A. Geisman, A. A. Gulevich! 7 and others, special attention was paid to resolving its fundamental issues: the nature and duration of a future war, the preparation of the armed forces and the country for war, the planning, preparation and methods of conducting strategic operations. However, the internal political events that took place in Russia led to the curtailment of reforms both in the socio-political and economic spheres, and in the military. It was not possible to fully solve a number of important tasks, including the introduction of new provisions of the national military strategy into the practical training of the highest military command and control bodies.

6. Military strategy of Russia on the eve and during the First World War

At the beginning of the twentieth century. Russia is again faced with a whole range of complex problems both within the country and abroad. There was a disengagement and a radical regrouping of military-political forces with the simultaneous unification of the leading states into opposing alliances, primarily military ones. Due to historical conditions, the Russian Empire continued to act as a leading power. A special geopolitical position, huge economic and human resources, powerful armed forces (in 1903 their number was 1,082,993 soldiers and officers!) allowed it to solve major international problems in its own interests. The West clearly understood its role and significance in the world. Therefore, on the one hand, France and England, on the other hand, Germany, which opposed them, actively sought to conclude a military-political alliance with Russia. This rivalry was won by the Entente, which in 1907 was joined by Russia.

Putting together their own military-political bloc, the Western powers hurried the ruling circles of Russia to carry out serious reforms in the military field as soon as possible. France was especially persistent in this regard. Numerous archival documents clearly show that Russia did everything possible to strengthen the military power of Russia. To this end, France provided her with financial support, expressed in multibillion-dollar loans, the lion's share of which was directed to military needs. At their repeated meetings, the chiefs of the general staffs of the armed forces of France and Russia

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corrected and coordinated plans for future joint military operations! 69. At the end of 1907, England actively joins the pressure on Russia. As always, pursuing its own interests, it sought to limit Russia's penetration into Central Asia and the Middle East, to force it to turn its forces against Germany in Europe.

For its part, the Russian government was also aware of the need for military reform, especially after the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, which ended in the political and military defeat of Russia. Again, its foreign policy positions were significantly undermined, and its influence in Europe, the Middle and Far East, and Central Asia declined. It was possible to restore the lost military power of the country, and, consequently, positions in the international arena, only through radical military transformations.

To no lesser extent, internal political contradictions forced the same. The outbreak of the first Russian revolution (1905-1907) showed that the army was incapable of resolutely fulfilling its internal function of protecting the ruling regime.

Finally, the need for reforms was caused by profound changes in the material and technical base of the war. And in general, Russia could not remain aloof from technological progress. However, for a number of reasons, she faced significant difficulties here. First of all, a serious gap arose between the broad political goals of the Russian Empire, its traditional role in world politics, and real economic opportunities. She could not keep up with the leading states in the field of rearmament and technical re-equipment of the armed forces, and without this she was not able to pursue an active military policy.

The Russo-Japanese War revealed all the weaknesses of the Russian army and navy. The "Most Submissive Report" on the Ministry of War for 1905 noted: "The past war with Japan subjected our army to a severe test, found out and emphasized all the shortcomings and gaps in its acquisition, training, supply, etc. A frank, without any self-deception recognition of these shortcomings is the first condition for their elimination in the future!

The war also showed that many provisions of Russian military art, especially in the field of military strategy, no longer meet the changed requirements. Moreover, it turned out that the understanding of the essence of military art and military science has long been outdated.

Thus, in a military encyclopedia published in 1912, the following definition was given: "The art of war has the task of achieving victory over the enemy in war with the least possible expenditure of forces, means and time. This is the most

the most complex and most difficult of all human arts... In the field of military art, all military operations must satisfy two main requirements: 1) in thought (concept) correspond to the basic ideas of military science; 2) in terms of execution, represent a complete whole in which all particular episodes would be a necessary consequence of the development of one general idea underlying the operation"!! And in the article "Military Science" it was noted that "military science is engaged in a comprehensive study of war. It studies: 1) a phenomenon in the life of society; 2) forces, means and methods for waging a struggle. The first area of research is expressed in social dynamics, the second is technically military, the theory of military art"!7?. It was further stated that "the art of war is expressed in the ability to use various forces and means (spiritual and material) to achieve victory in war. It has its own foundations, principles that express the essence of creativity in its field ... The task of the theory of military art is to firmly establish the basic

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its principles, study the most important elements of the situation and indicate how, under the influence of the situation, the principles are applied in war! According to the author, and in this he was not alone, military art includes a number of "secondary (concrete) military sciences": military administration, tactics, artillery, fortification, military topography, military statistics, military history, history of military art, military psychology, etc. "All these sciences," wrote the leading military theorist N.P. areas. The final summary of all these generalizations is produced in a strategy that seeks to develop a rational theory of the art of warfare... Strategy (theater tactics of military operations) is a synthesis of the conclusions of the auxiliary (concrete) departments of the theory of military art!". Thus, although strategy was recognized as the main element of military art, its tasks were unjustifiably narrowed.

Meanwhile, the changes that took place in the military-political, military-economic and military-technical spheres sharply increased the role of military strategy, and further strengthened its connection with military science and military doctrine. This was clearly understood by many Russian military theorists. And it is no coincidence that military-strategic views begin to develop rapidly during the period of military reform. In 1906, the second, and in 1911, the third revised and supplemented edition of N. P. Mikhnevich's work "Strategy" was published. In 1909, the capital work of A. G. Elchaninov "The Conduct of Modern Wars and Combat" was published, in 1910 - "The Fundamentals of Modern Military Art" by V. A. Cheremisov, and the following year - the book of A. A. Neznamov "Modern war"!5. The authors sought to bring the Russian military strategy in line with the new requirements. Unfortunately, not all the theoretical provisions put forward by them were accepted at the official level.

It would be worth noting that the official documents of that time differed in two fundamental strategic concepts: the "general plan for the defense of the state", which was a concentrated expression of military doctrine and included a set of measures taken by the government, and partly by public bodies to create and develop armed forces; and a "plan of war", which should have contained purely strategic considerations, providing for the operational use of the armed forces in this or that political combination!

In a more concrete form, the war plan was understood as "all preliminary considerations regarding: 1) the nature of the upcoming war, 2) determining the forces and means necessary to achieve the goal pursued, and 3) creating the starting position from which the troops should begin operations ... ". Mikhnevich argued: "The war plan defines all preparatory strategic operations (the creation of an army, the preparation of a theater of military operations in engineering terms - fortresses and communications, mobilization, transportation of troops and supplies by rail - and, finally, the strategic deployment of the army, to conduct which take many years to come to life.

As if in development of pre-existing views, Zaionchkovsky noted that "under the plans for war it would be more correct to understand not only the distribution of armed forces among different theaters and fronts, but also the establishment of those general grounds for waging war that would lead to the achievement of the political goal"! "8. Agreeing with him, another military theorist, V. A. Melikov, wrote: "A war plan in its essence belongs to the field of strategy, which covers all issues of preparing a given state for defense and waging war and leading it"!79.

Prior to the start of the Russo-Japanese War, the military department, when drawing up war plans for about 30 years, was guided by the provisions put forward by the military

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Minister D. A. Milyutin! °. The project of Russia's actions in the European theater developed by him was directed against a possible coalition of states. And indeed, already in 1879, the Dual Alliance was formed, which turned into the Triple Alliance, which included Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. The supposed coalition has become a reality. This, as A. M. Zaionchkovsky wrote, "led the Russian General Staff to at least three following conclusions: 1) that the hostile alliance, and especially Germany, outstripped Russia in combat training; 2) under modern conditions, even in peacetime, not only general considerations should be drawn up on the use of armed forces in case of war, but also carefully worked out calculations on the timing and areas of their concentration, and 3) due to the advantage in the speed of concentration of troops of the hostile side, our considerations for the initial period of campaigns should be confined to defense, and our military training is aimed at strengthening the frontiers and at improving existing fortresses!"°.

Taking into account these conclusions, at the beginning of 1880, "Considerations on War Plans" were developed and approved, drawn up by the Chief of the General Staff, General N. N. Obruchev. His proposals boiled down to holding back the enemy in one theater while preparing for a decisive offensive in another.

Moreover, all the actions of individual armies had to be connected by a single supreme command. [according to the General, at the beginning of the campaign it is more advantageous to adhere to a defensive mode of action against Germany and an offensive mode of action against Austria. The main forces of the Russian troops were to be deployed along both banks of the Vistula, where three large fortresses were built - Novogeorgievsk, Warsaw and Ivangorod. Providing freedom of maneuver, these fortresses were a springboard for an offensive and at the same time a serious obstacle for the enemy in case he forced the Vistula. The right flank of the Privilinsky region from the side of East Prussia was planned to be provided with a natural defensive line - the line of the rivers Bobr and Bugo-Nareva, reinforced by the fortresses of Osovets, Lomzha, Ostrolenka, Rozhany and Pultusk. The left flank was meant to be secured with only one Brest-Litovsk fortress, because it was here that it was supposed to attack in the first place. The strategic deployment and concentration of troops was planned to be covered by most of the peacetime army stationed in the western border districts"?.

Such a detailed plan of war in Russia appeared for the first time. Despite the superiority of the enemy in the speed of concentration, he was clearly active. All subsequent plans differed from it only in particulars, and the main idea was not subjected to significant changes⁸³.

So, in the adopted in 1900 and updated in 1902-1903. plan, the general idea of deployment remained the same, but the diversion of Russian forces and attention to the east forced the War Ministry, headed by A.N. Kuropatkin, to introduce some changes in the grouping of troops. To counter Germany, the Neman army moved to the area of the river. Beaver, and the front of its deployment was reduced. The number of troops sent against Austria-Hungary increased. For this, 4 infantry and cavalry divisions were transferred as a private reserve from the Caucasus. On the western border, the total forces were brought up to | 524 battalions, 1,078 squadrons and 4,802 guns, not including technical troops. It was assumed that the enemy would put up in the theater from 926 battalions, 487 squadrons and 2,972 guns to | 327 battalions, 682 squadrons and 5,092 guns. It depended on whether Germany sent 5 or 18 corps against Russia⁸⁴. To wage war, Russian troops deployed to the Northern Front, which consisted of 3 armies, against Germany and the Southern Front - in the amount of 4 armies - against Austria-Hungary. In addition to them, a common

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zerv and grouping for coastal defense. On the whole, the considered plan of war proceeded from the following basic principles of military strategy.

First, the nature of the future war was presented as a clash between Russia and an alliance of two or more states. This option was also envisaged: Russia in alliance with France against the Triple Alliance. The war was regarded as a short-term clash, for which the armed forces had to prepare. The main argument about the inevitability of a fleeting war was the prevailing opinion in Europe at that time about the financial and economic inability of states to withstand a protracted war. True, some Russian military theorists assessed the prospects for war and the role of the economy somewhat differently. So, in 1898, A. A. Gulevich wrote that it was the mass character of the army and the presence of a prepared reserve that “make us expect not a quick end to a future war with thunderous blows on the battlefields, but, on the contrary, a long, stubborn and prolonged struggle. Therefore, the question of the material means at the disposal of the parties for waging war for as long as possible is now of particular importance! But this statement was not taken seriously by official circles.

Secondly, the goals of the war were supposed to be achieved by one powerful strategic effort in one or two campaigns. Proceeding from this, the war was presented as a series of short-term clashes of infantry masses with the assistance of cavalry and artillery support, mostly of medium caliber.

Thirdly, the strategic goal set before the armed forces was to achieve decisive successes in the very first clash with the main enemy forces, which must either be destroyed in a short time or deprive them of the possibility of further resistance. Accordingly, it was considered necessary to concentrate the main efforts on the development of methods for the energetic conduct of military operations, mainly relying on the experience of the military art of Napoleon and Moltke. And it is no coincidence that all textbooks and works on strategy were saturated at that time with examples from the Napoleonic campaigns, as well as the principles of military art derived from their experience. For example, G. A. Leer wrote: “... in relation to the essence of strategic art in general, after Napoleon [there is nothing to improve it, but it can and should be improved only in particular”⁸⁶. Thus, it was assumed that the general nature of the forthcoming hostilities would differ little from what it was in the wars of the 20th century.

Fourthly, the military-strategic interests of Russia were mainly riveted to the Western European border, and only partly to the Caucasus and Turkestan, but the European theater of military operations was recognized as dominant. In accordance with this, the most rapid deployment of the main forces on the western border was considered the primary task of the Russian army. The total duration of their concentration was determined at 32 days. At the same time, Austria-Hungary completed its concentration on the 16th day, and Germany, according to preliminary calculations in 1902, could begin offensive operations on the 12th day. Such. the delay in the concentration of troops, the Russian command tried to compensate for the change in their deployment. Most of the field camps, i.e., were located in the western border strip. the most capable troops. For example, out of 25 corps available in 1902, 16 were located in the Vilna, Warsaw and Kiev military districts, which accounted for about 43% of the entire personnel of the Russian army in peacetime. Although such a deployment made it possible to somewhat shorten the time for going over to the offensive, it created great organizational difficulties in conducting mobilization, since it required large and expensive transportation.

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Fifth, since the Russian command, in general, recognized only an offensive war, it sought

to use for its conduct the position of the Privilinsky region advanced to the west, especially its left-bank section, for striking at Vienna and Berlin. However, the danger of the envelopment of the troops concentrated here by the enemy was underestimated.

Sixthly, the engineering preparation of the theater of war, especially the advanced Polish bag, was carried out with a double calculation: to provide cover for the concentration of troops, and at the same time freedom of maneuver, in addition, to equip the starting position for going on the offensive.

Seventh, the impossibility of offensive actions against two states at once made it necessary to choose Austria-Hungary as the main object of the offensive, and to conduct defense against Germany. Nevertheless, forces and means between the northern and southern fronts were distributed almost evenly.

As for the Asian and Caucasian theaters, the nature of the actions on them was supposed to be the same. Operations were planned to be carried out in a few valleys, choosing Erzurum as the main object of initial operations.

Much attention was also paid to the planning of the Bosphorus Landing Operation, or, as it was then called, the "Expedition to the Bosphorus". The total number of troops mobilized for her by the 6th day was determined at 94 thousand people. On the 9th day of mobilization, these troops were to concentrate in the Black Sea ports, and at the end of the 11th day they were to begin landing at the Bosphorus. By the 14th day, another 78 thousand people were going to be mobilized. It was planned that by the 19th day from the start of mobilization, about 170,000 people would take part in the operation. The detailed calculations carried out gave hope for its success, especially since the Turks could field no more than 215 thousand people to defend the Bosphorus by the 16th day, of which over 60% were redifs (reserve), completely untrained!

The implementation of the planned plan required urgent reforms, but their implementation was not always consistent. Particular difficulties arose in 1905-1909. The fact is that in the conditions of a reduced military potential after the lost Russo-Japanese War, it was difficult for Russia to count on decisive actions by its troops. Therefore, all plans bore the imprint of caution, based on the superiority of a potential enemy.

Germany was most feared in Russia. Austria-Hungary was not considered a serious adversary, because for the Russian General Staff the military weakness of this "patchwork empire", torn apart by the most acute internal contradictions, was no secret. On the other hand, the German armed forces, which won a brilliant victory in the war with France (1870-1871), against the background of the painful reorganization of the Russian army, were considered in the highest military circles as a formidable and dangerous enemy. In the report of the General Staff of September 30, 1908, it was noted, for example, that the ground forces of Germany include 46 corps (of which 23 are reserve and 19 cavalry divisions, including 8 reserve ones. It was further indicated that of these forces, the overwhelming mass of German troops will direct against the main enemy!

Since the main blow was expected against France, it was believed that Germany would deploy 18 corps on the Russian front, of which, according to the compilers of the report, from 10 to 13 corps could be concentrated between Mlava and the southeastern ledge of the Masurian Lakes, 1.5 Corps - on the Middle Neman, and the rest - dispersed along the line Bromberg-Poznan-Breslavl.

The documents at the disposal of the Main Directorate of the General Staff (GUGSH) made it possible to judge the possible deployment of the Austro-Hungarian army. Most likely, it was believed that 4 corps would be deployed in the Ternopil-

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Red, and 9 corps - on the front Lvov-Sokolov. Readiness for an enemy offensive was determined by the 19th day of mobilization, and full readiness - by the 18th-19th day. But the readiness of combat troops for action was assessed not earlier than in 15 days!'. Such a calculation was clearly overestimated: in any case, 18-20 corps, that is, almost half of the army, the German general staff, following the plan of A. Schlieffen about a blitzkrieg in the west, could not leave in a secondary direction. Therefore, in East Prussia one could expect a maximum of 4-5 corps, which is 4-4.5 times less than expected in the Russian General Staff.

Based on the calculations, the chief quartermaster of the Main Directorate of the General Staff, Colonel Yu. N. Danilov??? presented a report on the new strategic deployment of Russian troops! 3. Having determined the number of formations to be deployed in wartime in European Russia and the Caucasus at 30 corps, a separate division, 7 rifle brigades and 32 reserve divisions, Danilov included in the combat schedule for the western border 28 corps, infantry and 32 reserve divisions. The 2 corps located in the Transcaucasus, the reserve division of the North Caucasus and the corps in Central Asia were not even included in the combat schedule. In the vicinity of St. Petersburg and Finland, it was supposed to leave 3 corps and an infantry division in the event of an enemy landing. It was planned to deploy 18 reserve divisions in fortresses instead of field troops, and the remaining 25 corps and 13 reserve divisions would be distributed among the armies concentrated on the western border.

Based on the inflated data on the number of German troops, it was decided to delay the concentration of the armies being formed from the line of the Vistula and Narew rivers inland, to the Bialystok, Brest front, and echelon them in two lines. According to Danilov, the allocation of areas of concentration should have removed the danger of the German troops going to the rear of the forward troops. In the first line, he proposed deploying 16 corps and 44 reserve divisions, that is, two-thirds of the armed forces destined for operations in the west. The remaining third - 7 corps and 7 reserve divisions - were planned to be deployed on the second line. Their task was not to defeat the enemy, but again only to cover their flanks. Only after this was it possible

Analyzing the proposals of the chief quartermaster, Zaionchkovsky noted that the plan of 1908 "shows the mental impact of the passion for divination for the enemy and the desire to cover up everything and foresee the nature of strategic thinking ... Everywhere we see the same tendentious defensive, cautious and even prone to retreat strategy, and nowhere do we see a hint of the manifestation of any offensive tendency, of a desire to impose one's will on the enemy! °°. This criticism, which is largely fair, at the same time ignored the real capabilities of the Russian troops. Subsequently, Danilov himself wrote: "I cannot characterize otherwise the period of time from 1905 to 1910. inclusive, as calling it a period of complete military helplessness!"

And although the combat potential of the Russian army increased somewhat by the end of 1909 due to serious transformations, the mobilization schedule No. 19, approved on June 26, 1910, together with the instructions attached to it in case of war, was even more cautious. And from the directive of the General Staff, signed by its chief, General E. A. Gerngross, it follows that in the main issues "Germany, Austria-Hungary and Romania, being the main opponents, are invariably the best position ... that is, in terms of the speed of mobilization and concentration , weapons and combat training ... Using this circumstance, they will probably start a war with a quick invasion of our fatherland. This way for

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of them is possible even if Germany divides her forces for a simultaneous war with our ally France! 7.

The consequence of such conclusions was the transfer of the line of deployment of the main forces into the depths of the empire. All armies were given the task of concentrating in selected areas for this purpose, so that, by delaying the Austrian offensive by active operations of troops gathered south of Polesie, to the north of it, create the most favorable situation for the combined forces to go over to the general offensive. The leitmotif of the directive instructions to the troops that followed was the desire of the General Staff to carry out the concentration of Russian forces destined for the European theater of operations and their deployment in complete safety. This was achieved at the cost of the withdrawal of Russian troops from the advanced theater, where, in the only fortress of Novogeorgievsk, only 2 infantry divisions remained. Thus, the enemy got an excellent opportunity to unite the troops operating from East Prussia with the Austrian troops, striking from Galicia, and, consequently, to advance on a united front.

Since the plan of 1910 was contrary to the requirements of the Franco-Russian convention, all the commanders and chiefs of staff of the military districts spoke out against it impartially. Here is what V. A. Melikov wrote about this: "At the time when Hohenzollern Germany "dared" to distribute hundreds of thousands of copies of the map of the future Germany in Europe, in which Courland, Lithuania, Russian Poland and a number of regions of France and Belgium were painted in the color of the German territory: at that time, Gerngross and Danilov drew up a capitulation war plan with the strategic deployment of the tsarist armies back, leaving the advanced theater... Having received this plan, all the military districts sounded the alarm, started talking about political troubles in the General Staff, which, as it were, was preparing by this plan a blow in the back to "cordial agreement" with France! 3.

However, the military reforms of 1905-1912. allowed to significantly strengthen the military situation in Russia. Plans for mobilization schedule No. 19 were also revised. General Ya. G. Zhilinsky was appointed Chief of the General Staff instead of Gerngross. Under his leadership, work began on the preparation of a new strategic deployment plan. On February 23, 1912, Minister of War V. A. Sukhomlinov held a meeting in Moscow, which was attended by the Chief of the General Staff, commanders of troops and chiefs of staff of military districts, heads of departments of the Main Directorate of the General Staff.

Particular attention should be paid to the speech at the meeting of the Chief of Staff of the Kyiv Military District, General MV Alekseev. In a note offered to the attention of those present under the title "General Plan of Action", he stressed that the current political and military situation suggests the need to revise the general idea of military operations in a future war. In his opinion, first of all, it was necessary to abandon the system of strategic deployment and engineering preparation of the theater of operations, adopted in 1910, to move the area of deployment of Russian troops to the west, which made it possible to give the advanced theater and fortresses on the Vistula paramount importance. Alekseev proposed two options for action: inflicting the main blow either on the Austrian or on the German troops, but with a clear indication of the method of delivering such blows. However, in any case, he insisted on abandoning frontal attacks, which, according to the 1910 plan, were considered inevitable during deployment, and proposed replacing them with deep coverage from the right-bank region of the Vistula, which, according to his calculations, should have led to more decisive results? ®.

The draft of the new plan, prepared taking into account these considerations, was discussed on March 12, 1912 in St. Petersburg at a meeting of district commanders under

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by the chairmanship of Nicholas P. Finally, | May the plan was approved. In accordance with it, two deployment options were envisaged, depending on the situation that could have developed by the start of the war. The first - with the direction of most of the troops against Austria-Hungary (plan "A"). The second - with the direction of them against Germany (plan "D"). According to plan "A", 3 armies consisting of 45 infantry divisions, 18.5 cavalry divisions and 3 rifle brigades were concentrated against Austria-Hungary, and the remaining 2 armies consisting of 29 infantry, 9.5 cavalry divisions and 2 rifle brigades — against Germany. According to plan "G" 3 armies consisting of 4] infantry, 13.5 cavalry divisions and 2 rifle brigades dealt the main blow

against Germany, the remaining 2 armies, consisting of 33 infantry, 14.5 cavalry divisions and 3 rifle brigades, were exposed against Austria-Hungary.

Such a plan enabled the commander-in-chief no later than | On the 1st day of mobilization, decide which of the options is better to act on and in which direction to deliver the main blow. Zaionchkovsky wrote about this: "If we analyze in detail the entire project of 1912, we can see that it was easy for the commander, when bringing the main masses of troops to the theater of war, to combine in detail this or that grouping along the fronts, depending on his operational idea. The deployment of troops on a broad front, covering the flanks of the two enemy wedges that went into Russian territory, not only facilitated the regrouping of troops in the sense of a better use of the rail network, but also gave the commander more opportunities in the sense of the diverse application of his operational ideas.

In contrast to the previous plans, the 1912 plan set the general task of strategic deployment as "going over to the offensive against the armed forces of Germany and Austria-Hungary with the aim of bringing the war within their borders"???. In a word, despite the superiority of the enemy in terms of mobilization and deployment, it was decided to immediately put active tasks before the troops.

At the same time, it was understood that the Russian armies would be the first to launch an offensive and, in the shortest possible time, transfer their military operations to enemy territory. Further, it was supposed to defeat the 8th German army in East Prussia, and in the south, having surrounded and destroyed the main forces of the Austro-Hungarian troops, to seize Galicia, and then launch an offensive against Berlin, Vienna and Budapest. It was planned that the main goals of the war would be achieved in 1.5-2 months, since Germany would be squeezed in the vise of two fronts.

The main provisions of the plan and directives from | May 1912 remained in force until the beginning of the First World War, since the updated mobilization schedule No. 20 of 1913 by the beginning of the war remained in the General Staff only on paper and did not reach the troops. Comparing the plans of 1910 and 1912, it should be noted that the first of them proceeded from the state of the military system of Russia at the first stage of the military reform, when there was no need to think about any serious offensive operations at the very beginning of the war. In turn, the plan of 1912 was based not only on the real results of the second stage of the military reform, but also on the improvement of the entire military organization of Russia, which corresponded to the long-term plan of state defense. "The Russian operational plan of 1912 was, as it were, aimed at the future, based on the increment in the next two or three years of the necessary forces for the implementation of both offensive operations"? °3.

Nevertheless, by 1914 the possibilities for a simultaneous offensive in two directions had not yet been created. In addition, under pressure from the allies, the Russian government of Russia undertook to launch an offensive on the 16th-19th day of mobilization, while it needed at least two months to complete its strategic deployment.

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Thus, the strategic outlook in Russia has changed radically in just two years. Of course, this required not only enormous creative work, but also exceptionally voluminous practical work. Concerning this problem, V. A. Melikov posed the following question: "What does it mean to draw up a plan for the strategic deployment of the army of a given state in case of war?" And he himself answered: "... this means - it is necessary to calculate, calculate, check a large amount of data regarding the political and economic situation, weapons, equipment, manpower, the carrying capacity of railways, transport and transportation facilities, engineering support preparations for the theater of operations, etc., etc., both at home and with the enemy. For without this work, one can only place on the maps with a red-blue pencil circles and circles of various diameters, which will not say anything to the mind or heart"?

The new strategic plan proceeded from refined ideas about the possible nature of the upcoming war. Now it was viewed not just as a coalition, but as a European one, that is, with the participation of most European states. The views on the possible spatial scope of the war have also changed. If before that it was generally accepted that its main goals would be achieved by armed struggle in one theater of operations, then by 1912 it was recognized that it was possible to conduct military operations at once in 2-3 theaters, although within the same Eurasian continent. Finally, the General Staff in its plans and other documents recognized that in a future war the matter would not be limited to a clash of armies and fleets, the whole country would inevitably be involved in it. It was believed that the states would have to wage war with armies of many millions. With sufficient reliability, the probable groupings of the opposing sides, created and fully formed by that time military blocs, were determined. At the same time, despite the warnings of a number of Russian military scientists, the official Russian military strategy continued to make serious mistakes in assessing a possible war. First of all, this refers to the definition of its duration. Both before the Russo-Japanese war and after it, the short duration of the war was theoretically substantiated. Therefore, all planning was carried out with the expectation of its completion within a few months.

In accordance with this assessment, all practical tasks related, in particular, to mobilization, engineering preparation of the theater of operations, determination of expedient methods of military operations, and organization of strategic leadership were solved.

Although the system of military mobilization in those years was significantly improved, it still remained rather cumbersome. Within the limits of the European part of Russia and in the Caucasus, a territorial system of manning the armed forces for mobilization was introduced. In these territories, special areas for the replenishment of troops were determined: corps, divisional and regimental. Infantry regiments, together with the reserve regiments and stage units formed under them, were manned from their regimental districts; artillery brigades, together with secondary brigades deployed with them, from divisional areas

respective infantry divisions, support battalions, mortar divisions and all units that were part of the corps - from the corps areas; army rear units - from the area of the entire district.

The general needs of the army for its transfer to martial law were calculated as follows: 2 29] 780 soldiers, 912,840 horses, 51,654 wagons and 79,117 sets of teams. In the European part of Russia, the need for staffing was satisfied by 97% through the introduction of the territorial system. "In the districts

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The territorial system of Asiatic Russia was never introduced due to the insufficient number of reserves.

In relation to foreigners, that is, people of non-Russian nationality, the distribution of the reserve was planned so that in the Warsaw district the composition of the Polish element did not exceed 25-30% of the total composition of each part. In the Baltic provinces and in Transcaucasia, local residents were not supposed to exceed a third of the entire composition of the unit. As for the Jews, their maximum norm was no more than 6% of the military composition of each unit, in extreme cases it should not exceed 10%.

Based on the unsuccessful experience of the Russo-Japanese War, which showed all the shortcomings of the previous system of mobilization in the event of a small war, variants of private mobilizations were developed. The end result of the changes made to the mobilization schedule was that the terms for the readiness of troops and rear services were somewhat reduced. It was assumed that in the border districts (Vilna, Warsaw, Kiev and Odessa) infantry with field artillery, mortar divisions and wagon trains would be ready by the 4th-6th day of mobilization, the rear - by the 6th-8th day, the Caucasian district - only by / - 12 days, and Amur - by 5-10 days. The internal districts were mobilized in 5-8 days, the reserve ones in 16-36 days. Half of the secondary divisions were completed in 4 days, and the rest in 28 days. At the same time, field divisions in Germany could be ready on the 7th-9th day, and reserve divisions on the 9th-1st day. In Austria-Hungary, the readiness of the field troops was established on the 6th-8th day, the landwehr units on the 9th-10th day, and the marching brigades on the 14th day.

At the same time, the redeployment of Russian troops was carried out in such a way that 60% of them could be concentrated in time close to the mobilization of enemy troops. The pace of mobilization and strategic deployment depended to a large extent on the preparedness of the theater of operations in terms of engineering. First of all, this required further development of the road network and an increase in the capacity of railway lines. The state of the railway network was considered the most important criterion for the readiness and ability of the armed forces to carry out rapid deployment, since most of the mobilized units and formations were supposed to be transferred to combat areas only by rail.

Another no less important element in the preparation of the theater of military operations is the modernization of the fortresses that served as strongholds and supply bases for the already concentrated and deployed troops. General Yu. N. Danilov drew special attention to this from the country's top leadership in his report of August 14, 1909: a plan for building a network of strategic routes and, moreover, for the sake of completeness, in all probable theaters of military operations? ®.

And such a program was developed. It was supposed to be carried out in 1911-1914. The point was to overcome the backwardness of Russia in the development of the railway network during this period. At that time, only 10 gauges approached the German border from the Russian side, 7 gauges to the Austrian border, 2 gauges to the Romanian border, and 18, 14 and 4 gauges, respectively, were brought to the border from the side of potential opponents. Specific measures taken by the military department to achieve this goal were as follows. First, the construction of new roads and the laying of second tracks, primarily on the northwestern border, in the region of Vilna, Lida, Bialystok, Belsk. Secondly, the development of junction stations, especially in Minsk, Baranovichi, Bryansk, Malkin, Gomel and Bialystok. Thirdly, improving the capacity of these roads. Finally, the development of stations and sidings, the construction of landing

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platforms, communication devices, etc. Measures were also developed to improve the railway network in the Caucasus, Turkestan, Siberia and the Far East. However, the planned program for various reasons was only partially implemented.

The change in the war plan required a serious adjustment of the entire system of existing fortresses. In accordance with the plans of 1908 and 1910. on the withdrawal of the strategic deployment line inland, the fortresses of Sviyazhsk, Vyborg, Kronstadt, Ust-Dvinsk, Kovel, Osovets, Novogeorgievsk, Brest-Litovsk, Ochakov and Sevastopol were preserved and rebuilt. The fortresses of the Varshavsky region were to be abolished: Ivangorod, Zerzh, Lomzha, Ostrolenka, Rozhany, Pultusk and Kerch, i.e., only one fortress, Novogeorgievsk, was preserved at the advanced theater. With the introduction of the 1912 plan, Kovno, Grodno, Osovets and Brest were to be fortified along the deployment line. But their reconstruction was not completed, and the abolished fortresses did not have time to be restored. And so it happened that by the beginning of the First World War, Russia practically had only one modern fortress in its Western theater of operations.

Finally, the views on the methods of strategic actions of the armed forces were significantly refined. Everyone unequivocally recognized the offensive as their main type. However, the military command did not quite accurately imagine the real conditions and possibilities for offensive operations. The reason was that the experience of the Russian-Japanese war was not studied deeply enough. Despite numerous studies devoted to it, many instructive conclusions remained out of sight of the Main Directorate of the General Staff, not to mention other departments of the War Ministry. The difference in the scope of hostilities, in density

the saturation of the front with personnel and artillery, especially in the duration of operations in the Russo-Japanese war, compared with wars even of the recent past, was so great that it was the greatest mistake not to pay attention to it?

Unfortunately, in the highest military circles, the point of view of not the domestic, but the German military theorist F. Bernhardi, whose works were published more than once in that period, took root. He wrote: "The last Russo-Japanese war has a completely special character; although during it there were a number of battles waged by entire armies, there is no reason to suppose that the same thing will happen again in the future"?. As a result, a very specific opinion was formed that the combat experience of such wars can only be relevant to non-European conditions and is completely unacceptable for a major war in the Western European theater of operations. Based on this, the significance of the positional forms of struggle that appeared in the Russo-Japanese war was not fully taken into account.

In general, military strategy assessed the course of forthcoming military operations not by the nature, goals and means of war, but by the area, scope and ratio of fire and strike, that is, in essence, by the criteria of tactics. It was believed that military operations would be of a pronounced maneuverable nature. Offensive operations were supposed to be carried out by separate groupings of troops, by delivering frontal strikes, which would be combined with bypassing the enemy's flanks for his subsequent encirclement. 4-5 km. The so-called strategic cavalry was going to be used for reconnaissance and pursuit of the retreating enemy. As for the strategic defense, it was assumed only in secondary areas, and for a relatively short time.

Taking into account such installations, the entire system of strategic leadership and command and control of troops was improved. Already in the early years of the 20th century, in

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In Russia, and not in other countries, it was planned to create front-line departments, which were supposed to unite 2-4 armies. And this is completely natural, because in the conditions of the struggle against several opponents simultaneously with such a significant extent of the western border, the commander in chief would not be able to direct the operations of all the armies subordinate to him alone, in the event that they go on the offensive, when they have to act in divergent directions. . That is why it was decided to create an intermediate command instance - fronts?9. It was assumed that the main command would control the actions of the fronts, and the fronts - the armies.

As a result of the increase in the scope of hostilities, the role of headquarters has increased significantly. It was planned to entrust them with a wider range of tasks: collecting data on the situation, organizing the operation, developing directives and orders to the troops, analyzing reports from the troops and, on their basis, preparing proposals for the senior commander, establishing and maintaining communication with subordinate troops and higher headquarters . All these duties are quite fully described in the "Regulations on the field command and control of troops in wartime"?!. However, as always in Russia, the adoption of this provision was unjustifiably delayed.

Subsequently, General Danilov wrote this about this: "The crowning achievement of all work on the reorganization of the army was to be the revision of the Regulations on the Field Command of Troops in Wartime." This provision should have determined: the organization of higher military formations, their management, rear arrangements and the service of all kinds of supplies. The current regulation was published in the 90s of the last century (in 1894 - Ed.) and under modern conditions was completely inapplicable. This was shown even by the war of 1904-1905, during which a lot of fundamental changes had to be made. Despite a number of commissions working on a new project, things did not go well, and only by January 1913, when the preparation of the project, at the request of the department of the quartermaster general, was withdrawn from the commissions that hindered it and concentrated at the named department of the General Staff, the work was completed. . However, the project met with many objections, mainly from the departments that occupied a privileged position and wished to see their representatives more independent than was determined by the general scheme. Its consideration dragged on for more than a year, and only the impending events of 1914 accelerated the successful resolution of the case. What seemed insoluble under peaceful conditions of life for many months was resolved in anticipation of war in one night meeting. Only on July 29, 1914, that is, only three days before the start of the war, was one of the most important provisions for wartime approved by the supreme power"?!.

Russia's allies based their strategy of waging a future war on passive and expectant actions. France deliberately intended to cede the initiative to the enemy, and go on the offensive only after the Russian troops had diverted the main forces of Germany. England set the main goal of its strategic actions to preserve and strengthen dominance at sea, and planned to provide assistance to France in the land theater with the help of one expeditionary army. What did the countries-participants of the Triple Alliance oppose to their alleged opponents?

Germany's strategic plan, known as the Schlieffen Plan, was to defeat first France and then Russia with swift and crushing blows, thereby avoiding a war on two fronts. To implement this plan, it was originally planned to concentrate the main efforts (7 field armies) on the Western theater of war. Moreover, the main strike group of troops, deployed on the right wing, was supposed to deliver a sudden strike

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to the flank and rear of the French army, push it back to the fortresses of Lorraine, and then encircle and destroy it in one fleeting operation.

On the Eastern Front, it was planned to cover East Prussia with the forces of one 8th Army. Only after the victory over France was it planned to regroup the main forces here in a short time and, together with Austria-Hungary, defeat the Russian troops. The war was planned to end in two or three months.

The strategic plan of Austria-Hungary was, in essence, an integral part of the German plan. At first, while Germany was conducting active operations in the west, she had to defend herself, and then, united with her ally, attack Russia and victoriously end the war.

But, as is known, the strategic views developed on the eve of the war are tested by real practice in the fire of battles.

From the very beginning of the war, major shortcomings were revealed in the preparation of all states for its conduct. As early as July 24, in Russia, in response to the military preparations of Germany and Austria-Hungary following the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, at a meeting of the Council of Ministers it was decided to announce the mobilization of four military districts - Kiev, Odessa, Moscow and Kazan, and also the fleet. The next day, this decision was confirmed, but with the following proviso: "... do not announce mobilization yet, but take all preparatory measures for its speedy implementation if necessary"?!?.

Nicholas II signed the decree on general mobilization on July 29 after a meeting at which the inevitability of war with Germany was recognized. Unexpectedly, on the same day, the emperor received a telegram from Wilhelm II with an assurance to act as an intermediary between Russia and Austria, and most importantly, with a request not to hasten military preparations. Nicholas II decided to cancel the general mobilization and carry out only partial mobilization in four military districts, and only against Austria.

In view of the fact that such plans did not exist, and the implementation of partial mobilization in only four districts violated the harmony of the general mobilization plan, the General Staff took all measures to ensure that these measures did not take place. On July 30, Minister of Foreign Affairs S. D. Sazonov, after a meeting with the Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff, quite reasonably argued to the Emperor: taken by surprise by her? 3. The next day, Nicholas II agreed to put into effect the decree on general mobilization. There were days left before the start of the war. Such inconsistency in decision-making by no means contributed to the effectiveness of mobilization, and even more so of strategic deployment, which already took place in more difficult conditions compared to the enemy.

The numerical superiority in forces and means on the northern wing of the Eastern Front was with Russia. The Russian field armies of the North-Western and South-Western fronts (6 armies) had one common task: to go on the offensive and transfer military operations to the borders of Austria-Hungary and Germany. However, although the country had been preparing for war for a long time, the troops were unable to launch an offensive immediately after the official declaration of war by Russia. Due to the lack of transport and the low capacity of railways and highways, the troops were concentrated slowly. Thus, in East Prussia, the deployment of German forces (without part of the rear units) was completed on August 10, while in Russia operational transport of troops began only on August 8. The fully Russian army (without the militia) completed its mobilization only on the 45th day.

Under such conditions, the role of operational cover increased sharply. However, it was not well organized. Aerial reconnaissance due to the small number of aviation

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Table D. The balance of forces of the parties in the Eastern European theater at the beginning of hostilities

State, army Infantry divisions Cavalry divisions Guns Russia Northwestern Front 1st 6.5 5.5 402.0 2nd 11.0 3.0 702.0 Total 17.5 8.5 1104.0 Southwestern Front 4 -th 6.5 3.5 426.0 5th 8.0 3.0 516.0 3rd 12.0 3.0 685.0 8th 8.0 3.0 472.0 Total 34.5 12 .5 2099.0 Total in the Eastern European theater 52.0 21.0 3203.0 Germany and Austria-Hungary 8th German. 15.0 1.0 1044.0 Wursch Corps 2.0 - 72.0 Kummer Group 2.5 1.0 106.0 9.0 2.0 450.0 9.0 2.0 436.0 6.0 3.0 288.0 Keves group 9.0 3.0 448.0

Total to the east

European theater 2844.0

could not reveal the concentration and deployment of enemy troops. The huge superiority in cavalry that the North-Western Front had (9 cavalry divisions and about 2 regiments of military cavalry against the German cavalry division) seemed to allow the Russian command to organize active reconnaissance operations, but this opportunity was not used? \".

Things were no better on the Southwestern Front. Moreover, fragmentary reconnaissance data in this strategic direction convinced the Headquarters and the front command that the Austro-Hungarian headquarters was deploying its armies according to the version of the plan that the Russian General Staff had, while in reality the deployment was carried far back.

During the period of border battles, the same cavalry was charged with disrupting the strategic deployment of the enemy by delivering surprise strikes, raids and raids. But despite the favorable conditions, she did not fully manage to cope with this. Therefore, the Russian General Staff and Headquarters were forced to make decisions at random. So, according to the war plan of 1912, by the 10th day of mobilization, the Commander-in-Chief should have had quite reliable intelligence that would allow him to decide which of the deployment options ("A" or "D") to proceed with. Although it was not possible to collect such comprehensive data, by the 7th day of mobilization it was known at Headquarters for certain that the main forces of Germany were thrown against France. And if we take into account that the 2nd Austro-Hungarian army moved south, then as the main plan, the situation is almost

unequivocally put forward option "A", that is, the main attack in the south-west direction.

Nevertheless, the directives of the Headquarters of August 10 and 12 indicate that the Supreme Command of the Russian Army was still hesitant in making a decision, but was more inclined to focus on option "G". In this regard, and also taking into account the request of the French General Staff, it was decided, along with the advance to East Prussia, to advance in the direction of Poznan, and then to Berlin. To this end, a new 9th Army, then the 10th, began to form from the corps allocated by the 1st Army of General P.K. Rennenkampf. It is worth recalling that the pre-war plans for such an offensive did not even provide for. The desire to attack everywhere and at the same time to cover everything only led to the dissipation of forces and means. As a result, at the beginning of the war, a definite grouping was not created, which would prepare the main attack in the decisive direction. Instead, the troops were stretched along the border with a lot of improvisation.

To all this, it is not superfluous to add the desire of the Russian command to launch an offensive at all costs, with little concern for the fact that the deployed enemy is confronted by disparate corps and divisions, devoid of wagon trains and rear lines. Particularly zealous in this regard was General Ya. G. Zhilinsky, commander of the Northwestern Front, whose signature was under the Franco-Russian military convention. On August 10, 1914, he proposed to the Headquarters to send the 3rd Corps to East Prussia on August 15. Zhilinsky argued that by this "we are at least partially fulfilling our obligations towards France ..."?!?. The headquarters did not approve the proposal of the zealous general, rightly believing that the defeat of this corps was ensured even before the arrival of other corps, which at that time were only concentrating.

The first two or three weeks of the war constituted its initial period. Its main content was the mobilization, strategic concentration and strategic deployment of the main forces of the belligerents. Only the covering troops and advanced units for the invasion were then fighting in the border areas with limited goals. On the Western Front, Germany sought to capture the crossings on the river. Maas to create favorable conditions for the offensive of the main forces. Here, in a 580-kilometer strip, she deployed 7 armies (almost 88 infantry and cavalry divisions) with a total strength of 1,600 thousand people. They were opposed by 5 French, English and Belgian armies (100 infantry and cavalry divisions) - about 1 600 thousand

Human.

In the Eastern European theater of operations against Russia were deployed 1 German, 3 Austro-Hungarian armies and 2 army groups (approximately 65 infantry and cavalry divisions) over 1 million people. As already mentioned, Russia fielded 6 armies against them (73 infantry and cavalry divisions), which included 850 thousand people.

Here it is appropriate to tell about the operational-strategic game that took place in Kiev from April 20 to April 24, 1914. It is indicative in the sense that, in essence, the same miscalculations and mistakes were made at it, which were revealed in August 1914, moreover they were carried out by the same persons from among the high command. We are talking about Generals Ya. G. Zhilinsky, P. K. Rennenkampf, V. A. Oranovsky, N. I. Ivanov, M. V. Alekseev, N. V. Ruzsky. At the end of the game, they deserved, at best, gratitude for "decisive action." In practice, this resulted in an adventurous offensive by not fully concentrated corps, and even without rears, which led to the tragedy of the 2nd Army of General A.V. Samsonov. So the Russian army paid for the political and strategic mistakes of its military-political leadership, for a simplistic approach to the most important issues of conducting

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war, underestimation of the importance of the material support of the troops, ignoring the real calculations of the balance of forces and the timing of deployment. The reference to the formula, which suited many, that "transportation and the entire rear of the fronts and armies work without delays and interruptions" did not help?! Because of their unwillingness to deal with boring, in their own words, issues of material support, the chief quartermaster General Shuvaev, the head of the Military Communications Directorate, General Dobrynin, and the chief military sanitary inspector, General Evdokimov, ended up at that very game simply in the role of silent observers. True, Alekseev in his memos tried to prove the need to correlate the pace of the offensive with the issues of the work of the rear, but, unfortunately, his sensible thoughts remained without due attention from the leaders of the military game.

Despite the obvious results, this war game was buried in the safes of the Russian General Staff, and its conclusions are obscured. However, the very first days of the war not only reminded of its instructive conclusions, but also summed up their original result. This time, the Russian generals, not in the game, but on the battlefield, received cruel lessons.

Contrary to all pre-war forecasts, the war dragged on for a long 4 years.

The campaign [1914] was connected with the failure of the strategy of fleet war and the transition from maneuverable to positional forms of struggle. In the west, it began with the occupation of Luxembourg (August 2), the German invasion of Belgium (August 4), and the subsequent frontier battle between German and Anglo-French armies (August 21-25). In the east, on August 17, Russian troops entered East Prussia.

In the Western European theater, the shock group of German troops managed to invade Northern France and launch an offensive against Paris. However, in connection with the threat that arose in the east, the German command had to urgently transfer 2 army corps and a cavalry division to East Prussia. Taking advantage of this, the French army launched a strong counterattack in the battle near the river. The Marne (September 5-12) inflicted a serious defeat on the German troops, pushing them back 50-60 km to the north. In the future, both sides sought to bypass the open northern flank of the enemy ("running to the sea"), which led to

formation of a continuous front from the North Sea to Switzerland. Having exhausted their offensive capabilities and having no reserves, the opposing troops switched to a tough positional defense.

And in the Eastern European theater, the troops of the North-Western Front of General Zhilinsky in the oncoming battle near Gumbinnen inflicted a major defeat on the 8th German Army of General P. Hindenburg, but the success achieved was not used. A gap formed between the two Russian armies that had invaded East Prussia and were advancing on Koenigsberg. Taking advantage of this and bringing into the battle the approaching reserves, the German command concentrated superior forces against the 2nd Army of General Samsonov and defeated it in the battle near the Masurian Lakes (August 26-31). Then the Germans attacked the inactive 1st Army of General Rennenkampf with all their might and threw it back beyond the Neman.

More successful were the actions of the troops of the Southwestern Front, commanded by General Ivanov. During the Battle of Galicia (August 19-September 21), they inflicted a series of defeats on the Austro-Hungarian troops, pushed them back 200 km to the west, captured Galicia and reached the foothills of the Carpathians. But this success was not developed either.

Along with the main theaters of military operations, the armed struggle unfolded in the Balkans, in the Transcaucasus, in the Middle and Far East. The Caucasian, Balkan, Syrian, Mesopotamian and other fronts were formed, but they played an auxiliary role in the general course of the war. Active operations began on the sea and oke

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Front line to Komets 1914

Actions of the parties

© East Prussian operation 17 \P - 14. 1X surrounded by two buildings of the 2nd Russian Armin 29-30. USCH

» Galician battle 19 UI - 26. X

» Warsaw-Mvangorod operation 28 1X-8.X1

in Lodz and Czÿstochowa-Krakosz Operations 11-24. X]

Scheme 16. Campaign of 1914 in the Eastern European theater

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Ansk theaters of war. At the same time, England managed to maintain its supremacy at sea and establish a naval blockade of Germany.

In general, the military campaign of 1914, due to major mutual mistakes on both sides, ended in the collapse of the original strategic plans. The armies suffered huge losses, and the previously accumulated mobilization reserves were completely used up. A long operational pause formed in the hostilities, which each of the participants tried to use to rebuild the country's economy on a war footing, mobilize new human and material resources to continue the war.

The military campaign of 1915 was characterized by a further increase in the strategic efforts of the parties and the formation of a positional stalemate. Germany shifted her main efforts to the east with the aim of withdrawing Russia from the war and getting rid of the need to wage a war on two fronts. As a result of the Gorlitsky breakthrough undertaken by the German army during the August offensive, the offensive in the Vilna region and the subsequent Sventsyansky breakthrough, as well as a number of other operations, Russian troops were forced to leave Galicia, Poland and Lithuania. However, attempts to withdraw Russia from the war failed. The Russian armies managed to avoid encirclement by chaining the main forces of the German-Austrian bloc to themselves; and in the Caucasus, during the Alashker offensive operation, to stabilize the front line and create good prerequisites for a further offensive into Turkey. In this campaign, the Russo-German front became the main front of the war.

In the Western European theater, England and France initially limited themselves to strategic defense. The private operations carried out at Ypres, in Artois and Champagne, as well as the Dardanelles landing operation, were not successful.

In the secondary theaters, the battles went on with varying degrees of success. Bulgaria joined the German-Austrian bloc, and Italy joined the Entente. The attempts of the Entente countries to withdraw Turkey from the war failed.

The campaign of 1916 also did not reveal the decisive advantage of any of the belligerents. Germany was forced to continue the war on two fronts, and even in the grip of a naval blockade, the Entente countries had to look for new ways to solve the complex military-political and strategic tasks that arose before them.

1916 was marked by the further development and intensification of positional warfare, although both sides tried to find a way out of the positional impasse. Germany again shifted its main efforts against France. The main blow was dealt in the Verdun area. The Verdun operation began on February 21 after 9 hours of artillery preparation. But, despite all the power of the initial strike, it was not possible to carry out an operational breakthrough. The offensive took on a protracted character. In fact, it resulted in a struggle of attrition with a methodical gnaw through defense. In six and a half months, the German troops advanced only 7-10 km and in the end were forced to go on the defensive. In the autumn battles, they were driven back to their original positions.

In July 1916, the Entente troops, after 7 days of artillery preparation, launched a major offensive operation near the river. Somme (July-November). In the course of it, the British command used tanks for the first time. Initially, the allies were successful, but soon the offensive bogged down. Fierce positional battles continued until late autumn, but again to no avail. Both sides suffered huge losses: the Anglo-French troops - 800 thousand, the German troops - 500 thousand people.

In the Eastern European theater, the most important event of the 1916 campaign was the offensive of the Russian Southwestern Front under the command of General A. A. Bru

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==> › Northern region - (comes of April) C—> 8 breakthrough near Prasnysh (30. \ 1)

night = in the Sventsyansky breakthrough (27-US h -6. 1)

———— Intermediate* lines of defense of Russian troops

Front line and end of campaign

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Scheme 17. The campaign of 1915 on our theater

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Silov, which went down in history under the name of the Brusilov breakthrough (June-August). In the course of it, the Russian troops, breaking through the enemy defenses on a front of about 550 km, advanced to a depth of 80-120 km. German and Austro-Hungarian troops lost over 1.5 million people, including 450 thousand prisoners. The enemy was forced to transfer 34 divisions here from the Western and Italian fronts, which greatly facilitated the position of the Anglo-French armies, and saved the Italian troops from defeat in the Trentino operation.

In the Caucasus direction, the Russian armies successfully carried out several offensive operations against Turkey. On the Balkan and Mesopotamian fronts, the Entente troops stepped up military operations. Of great importance was the Battle of Jutland, the largest naval battle of the entire war. As a result, the British fleet consolidated its dominant position in the Atlantic, and the German command had to give up hope of breaking the naval blockade. On the whole, the campaign of 1916 ended with Germany losing the strategic initiative and turning the war in a direction more favorable to the Entente.

The military campaign of 1917 is characterized by the attempts of the parties to move to a new strategy of warfare. The plan of the Entente provided for delivering a number of partial strikes against the enemy, followed by a transition to a general strategic offensive. Germany decided to conduct a strategic defense on all fronts in order, having accumulated reserves, to resume hostilities only the next year. Russia intended to conduct a series of operations aimed at improving its strategic position. The entry into the war of the United States of America finally changed the balance of forces in favor of the Entente.

However, the April offensive of the allies, undertaken with the aim of defeating the enemy in the Western European theater, did not lead to success. Private operations in the area of Ypres, Messina, near Verdun and Cambrai did not significantly change the situation, although in the latter new means of struggle were used - tanks and aircraft.

The Mitav operation organized by the Provisional Government of Russia and the June offensive of the Southwestern Front also ended in failure. The German and Austro-Hungarian troops, which went on the counteroffensive, liquidated the initial success of the Russians and threw them back to the east.

Thus, the German-Austrian bloc in the land theaters managed to repel the attacks of the Entente, Germany achieved some success in the all-out submarine war it had undertaken.

The further plans and actions of the parties were seriously affected by Russia's withdrawal from the war. The Entente only partially compensated for the loss of such an important strategic ally in the autumn of 1917, when American troops appeared in the Western European theater. But the decisive factor was that the forces of Germany and Austria-Hungary were already running out.

The final military campaign of 1918 took place in a complex and tense military-political situation. In the first half of the year, Germany temporarily took over the initiative. Going on the offensive in Pacardy, on the rivers Ain and Marne. From March to July, German troops broke through the enemy defenses in a number of sectors and advanced to a depth of 30-40 km, but due to the lack of reserves they were unable to build on their success.

Having repulsed German attacks and using their overwhelming superiority in manpower and means, the Entente troops carried out several private offensive operations in the area of Amiens (August), Saint-Mihiel (mid-September), near the river. Marne (July-August). On September 26, they launched a general offensive. Germany had to admit defeat. Following her, Austria-Hungary capitulated.

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Front line I start the campaign

Actions of the parties near Lake Naroch and Dvinsk 18-ZhÿYu.Sh

The offensive of the Russian troops in June - - September and the counterattacks of the Austro-German troops

Baranovich operation (mid-July - mid-July)

The offensive of the Romanian troops 28.M!! in Transylvania

Romanian Ffromg 28.USH - 25.1X

Austro-German offensive against Romania {end of September - December}

Change linmy fromta and end of campaign

Transfers of Austro-German troops

Scheme [8. 1916 campaign in the Eastern European theater

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In general, the First World War continued | 568 days and nights. It was attended by 38 states with a population of 1.5 billion people. About 73.5 million people were mobilized into the ranks of the armed forces. The length of the fronts exceeded 4 thousand km. The losses of the sides in killed and dead from wounds amounted to more than 9.5 million people, not to mention 20 million wounded, which exceeded the losses of all European countries in a thousand years.

The results of the war had a huge impact on the entire subsequent course of world history.

Russia took the most active part in the war, mobilizing a total of 15.7 million people, or 8.7% of the country's population. The Russian front, stretching from the shores of the Baltic to the Black Sea, turned out to be the main one, and the events that took place on it influenced the entire course of the war. By September 1915, that is, a year after the start of the war, the number of Austro-German divisions on the Russian front had already reached 166 infantry and 24 cavalry, while 86 and 10 divisions were operating on the Western Front, respectively. In all campaigns, the Russian army fought actively, more than once saving its allies from defeat. Russia paid a heavy price for its participation in the war: it lost 2.3 million people in killed alone. During the war, Russian troops in the East European and Caucasian theaters carried out over 25 front-line operations.

The First World War forced to reconsider many of the established provisions of military strategy. First of all, it finally forced us to abandon the hitherto prevailing strategic concept of the possibility of achieving victory in one pitched battle. Its experience convincingly confirmed that when mass armies enter into confrontation, the outcome of the war can be decided only by a long, intense struggle, with the full use of all the economic and moral possibilities of the country. Already at the end of 1914, it became obvious to everyone that the hopes of the belligerents for a victorious end to the war within a few months were not destined to come true. And it is no coincidence that not a single state was able to fully implement its strategic plan both at the beginning of the war and in subsequent years.

Achieving victory in the war became possible only as a result of a series of successive military campaigns, in each of which the armed forces carried out several operations. At the same time, the goals of military campaigns acquired a fundamentally new character. Now they were a combination of a large number of simultaneous and successive operations of various types and scales, carried out over a large territory along the front and in depth, connected by a unity of purpose and design.

Nor did the prewar military strategy's precepts about the maneuverable nature of war come true. The participation of armies of many millions, capable of creating huge continuous fronts, powerful defense and the lack of means for its simultaneous suppression, at the same time, the lack of reserves, the low mobility of troops led to the fact that the armed struggle was bound to take on a stubborn positional character. A new form of warfare took shape on continuous positional fronts, which could only be crushed by a deep strategic breakthrough.

For the Russian military strategy in this war, the main tasks were the determination of the most important fronts, the expedient distribution of forces and means, as well as the creation of the necessary superiority over the enemy in the main strategic directions. I had to change the very approach to assessing the balance of forces and means, to determine the criteria for superiority. If in previous wars the Russian military command calculated the balance of forces and means in the main

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Froth line to the beginning of the campaign

Mitavskaya operation of the 12th Russian army 5-11.1

June offensive of Russian troops and breakthrough area

Tarnopol breakthrough of the Russian Southwestern Front in July

July offensive of Russian troops

Riga operation of the 8th German army 1-6.1X

Moonsund operation of the Russian and German fleets 12-20.X

100 0 100 - 200 km | Scheme 19.

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1917 campaign in the Eastern European theater

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divisions, now not only military formations, but also artillery, tank, engineering and other units were taken into account. At the same time, for each grouping of troops, it became necessary to calculate the required amount of materiel and transport.

Depending on the situation, the Russian military command concentrated its main efforts on the Northwestern, Western, or Southwestern fronts. Therefore, it was necessary to transfer large forces over long distances, in particular: at the final stage of the East Prussian and Warsaw-Ivangorod operations, during the liquidation of the Gorlitsky and Svetsyansky breakthroughs, during the development of the July offensive carried out by the Southwestern Front in 1916, during the restoration Romanian front and in a number of other cases. However, the scope of the maneuver was limited by the poor development of frontal and rout communications, not to mention the chronic lack of transport. Therefore, often the enemy, having the opportunity to maneuver in their internal operational areas, forestalled the Russian troops in the regrouping of forces, and they were not in a position to build up efforts in a timely manner and build on the emerging success.

Serious problems had to be solved by Russian strategy in connection with the choice of expedient forms and methods of strategic action. It should be recalled that Russia entered the war full of hopes from the very beginning to carry out decisive offensive operations up to enveloping the enemy's flanks and encircling his main forces. This was the basis of her strategic plan for the war. However, it soon became clear that the goal could be achieved only by carrying out various types of operations, and of various scales. It also required a radical review of the way they were managed.

The main types of strategic actions of the Russian troops were strategic defense and strategic offensive, where the decisive role belonged to the ground forces. In the campaign of 1915, several counteroffensives were successfully carried out, and the strategic offensive carried out thwarted an attempt by the German command to encircle the Russian armies on the left bank of the river. Vistula.

Most often, strategic tasks were solved by army groups. It should also be said about the origin of the front-line operation. True, it did not receive full development, continuing to remain, in essence, the sum of a number of army operations carried out according to a common plan and plan. At the same time, the need to organize larger-scale operations was revealed. Thus, the Battle of Galicia unfolded on a 400-kilometer front and lasted about a month. It consisted of several simultaneous and successive operations of army groups. Many operations have acquired a combined character. For example, the East Prussian operation began as an offensive and ended in defense. The Gorlitsky operation, on the contrary, began with a defense, and ended with a counteroffensive. Often, operations began in one direction, and then spread to adjacent directions, etc.

Offensive operations by army groups, and then by fronts, pursued, as a rule, strategic goals. Usually they were carried out in strips 300-400 km long, for 20-30, and sometimes more, days. In the 1914 campaign, offensive operations were usually planned in great depth. Thus, in 1914, the Northwestern Front was set the goal of capturing the whole of East Prussia with a subsequent attack on Berlin. The purpose of the offensive operation of the Southwestern Front was the invasion of the Hungarian Valley, followed by the capture of Vienna and Budapest. However, reality overturned all the initial calculations of the General Staff and the command of the fronts. The increased power of the enemy's fire impact, the weak mobility of the troops, the constant shell "hunger" did not allow the Russians to develop the success that had been emerging. advancing

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troops suffered heavy losses, and therefore quickly lost their combat effectiveness. Therefore, the effectiveness of almost all offensive operations turned out to be significantly lower than calculated, which resulted in the need to plan most of the offensive operations in 1915-1916. to a relatively limited depth. Moreover, the tasks were not always carried out.

During this period, the strategy had to solve such an important problem as breaking through the enemy's defense front. Experience has shown that it was possible to break through the positional defense only under the condition of a significant superiority over the enemy in the direction of the main attack and its reliable fire suppression. At first they tried to carry out a breakthrough in narrow sections of the fronts in one or several directions by means of a frontal strike. Moreover, the offensive zone of the division was gradually reduced from 10-12 km to 5-6, and then to 2.5-3 km. Usually a breakthrough was preceded by a long artillery preparation with a density of 40-50 guns per | km front. For a breakthrough, deployed battle formations of the "wave of chains" type were used. This met the requirements of a methodical frontal offensive, but hampered the maneuver of the troops and led to heavy losses.

Since 1916, both on the Western and on the Eastern fronts, attempts began to be made to overcome the positional impasse with the help of new methods of breakthrough. At the same time, the Anglo-French command made the main bet on further massing of forces, an increase in the duration of artillery preparation and the use of tanks. In the Russian army, special importance was attached to achieving surprise, improving the organization of fire suppression of the enemy, but above all, to the actions of troops during a breakthrough, which delivered simultaneous and successive strikes on a wide front. This was most clearly manifested during the organization of the offensive of the Southwestern Front, the so-called Brusilov breakthrough. Then the main blow was delivered on the left wing of the front by the forces of the 8th Army in a section of 2] km; the remaining three armies delivered auxiliary blows, breaking through the enemy defenses in sectors of 7-1] km. In general, the breakthrough was carried out in 13 sectors (4 army and 9 corps) in a 450-kilometer strip. On the direction of the main attack, the average artillery density reached 40-50, and on the auxiliary - 15-20 barrels per | km. The duration of artillery preparation ranged from 6 to 46 hours. As already noted, this operation was a major success. And only the belated decision of the Headquarters to transfer strategic reserves to this direction from the Western Front did not allow to complete the defeat of the enemy.

Great progress during the First World War was achieved in the organization and conduct of strategic defense. In essence, defense was the basis of military operations. In the Eastern European theater, for example, Russian troops were mostly on the defensive (about 3/4 of the time of combat operations). Of course, this could not but fundamentally change the views on the nature and method of conducting defense. Thus, the campaign of 1914 already showed that the defense, based on the holding of fortresses, had completely outlived itself. As a result, both opposing sides everywhere switched to the organization of field positional defense with a long-term retention of the occupied lines. The consequence of this was the creation of continuous fronts, echeloned in depth and equipped in engineering terms with a system of lanes and positions, the basis of which was a system of trenches.

Gradually, ideas about the goals and content of defense also changed. At first, strategic defense was mainly passive in nature and was designed to gain time. In subsequent campaigns, it began to be used to hold occupied lines and strategically important areas, deplete

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the enemy and inflicting defeat on his advancing troops. Further improvement of the defense went in the direction of increasing the depth of its separation, improving the engineering equipment of the area, and increasing the activity of the troops. At the same time, the role of maneuver and counterattacks to restore the lost position increased. At the end of the war, elements of anti-tank and anti-artillery defense appeared. The so-called elastic defense began to be used. Its essence was that the possibility of temporary loss of advanced positions and transfer of fire in depth was allowed so that, when the enemy's offensive dries up, they could defeat him with strong counterattacks from the front and flanks.

An increase in the efficiency of the strategic offensive and defense was facilitated by the development of methods for the use of all types of troops. Thus, during the war years, new methods of artillery preparation and offensive support were developed, including through successive concentration of fire, single and double fire shafts. Artillery counter-preparation began to be used. The foundations for the combat use of tanks and aircraft were developed. Military air defense began to emerge.

The First World War brought about enormous changes in the views on the creation and use of strategic reserves. On the eve of her teacher of the Academy of the General Staff, Colonel A. A. Neznamov, stated: "... It is useless to keep a general reserve directly in the rear ...". His student Nikolaev echoed him: "... a reserve in a strategy with a combat goal is a criminal thing ..."?". It is hardly worth reproaching both for conservatism, for such

attitudes stemmed from the generally accepted idea of the short duration of a future war. However, even the first operations showed that without systematic preparation, stockpiling, and, most importantly, rational use of strategic reserves, the successful conduct of a war is unthinkable. It was the lack of reserves that was one of the reasons for the tragedy of the Russian troops that broke out in the East Prussian operation.

In subsequent years, strategic reserves were created mainly through new formations. Great difficulties, however, arose with their advancement to the combat areas. Nevertheless, this problem, albeit with difficulty, was successfully solved. Already in September-October 1914, the Headquarters regrouped, partly by rail, partly by marching order, the 4th, 5th and 9th armies from the Krakow direction to the Middle Vistula, and sent the 2nd army from the region of the river. Narew near Warsaw ". In 1915, the skillful transfer of reserves saved the Northwestern Front from a strong German attack. In 1916, 10 corps and 1 | infantry divisions were regrouped from the Western and Northwestern Fronts to the Southwestern Front. Most often, reserves were used to restore the disrupted strategic front, strengthen the defense and build up efforts during the offensive.

In a number of cases, the use of strategic reserves was influenced by allied obligations. True to their duty, the Russians often sent reserves not where their own strategic interests required, but with the expectation of helping the allies out of a difficult situation.

During the war, the task of restoring the combat capability of the troops acquired particular importance. First of all, their staffing with human resources. It is known that in peacetime the size of the Russian army was 1,300 thousand people. In connection with the mobilization, another 3,500,000 were called up, of which 2,200,000 were intended to complete the army to wartime states, and 1,300,000 were required for the deployment of spare parts and logistic institutions. It was believed that out of every | | 500 thousand people of the population, Russia will be able to deploy one division, while Germany, however, and France, too, planned from the same calculation times

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Scheme 20. Organization of leadership of the Russian Armed Forces in the First World War

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return three divisions?!°. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Russia had to mobilize 4.5 times more conscripts during the war. Part of them went to the formation of reserves, and the main mass in the form of marching reinforcements - to restore the combat capability of the troops.

The issue of providing the active army with weapons, military equipment and especially ammunition arose very acutely. Already by mid-August 1914, when mobilization was completed, the entire stock of rifles and revolvers (4,652,000 and 424,000, respectively) went into service with an army of 5 million. By the following autumn, the regiments had only a quarter of the weapons laid down for them in the state?? °. The capabilities of the Tula, Sestroretsk and Izhevsk arms factories turned out to be very limited, and delivery from abroad was too difficult. And although the Russian army still received | | 800 thousand rifles from France, Italy, England, Japan, and even 650 thousand rifles from America, these deliveries could not cover the ever-increasing needs of the army. Only for 1914-1916. losses in rifles amounted to a huge figure - about 7 million pieces ?? '. An even more difficult situation has developed with regard to the supply of troops with machine guns, artillery and all types of ammunition.

Fundamental changes have taken place in the organization of the strategic leadership of the armed forces. Its main body was the Headquarters of the Supreme Commander. At first, its functions were limited to operational planning and the use of troops. However, soon she had to take on other tasks related to the conduct of the war, including those of a military-political and military-economic nature. Strategic planning has risen to a higher level. The Headquarters resolved the most important issues of strategic interaction, developed plans for military campaigns and strategic operations, and their logistic support. However, the peculiarity of the socio-political conditions in Russia did not allow achieving complete unity of political, military and economic leadership. Unfortunately, the activities of the Headquarters were greatly influenced by court circles, which did not contribute to its sufficient firmness in command and control.

Nevertheless, by the middle of 1916, a certain system for assessing the situation and making decisions had been established at the Headquarters and the General Staff. Usually, after analyzing the situation, the Headquarters made a preliminary decision and brought it to the front commanders, and after analyzing the opinions of the front command, gave the final directive. When making particularly important strategic decisions, the Headquarters held meetings with the commanders-in-chief of the fronts. Such meetings have firmly entered the practice of the Supreme High Command.

As the war developed, the leadership system was improved: Headquarters - Front - Army. Although such a system was adopted on the eve of the war, in practice the Supreme High Command was not ready to implement it. Already in the first months of the war, when only two fronts were deployed, the Headquarters showed complete inability to lead them. Only with the introduction of new technical means of communication and the acquisition of relevant experience did it manage to achieve greater centralization and efficiency in the management of fronts and armies operating in various directions.

The First World War, as expected, became a coalition war. It was quite obvious that its success largely depended on the coordinated actions of the allies and the coordination of their military efforts. It is also obvious that not a single state developed the theoretical foundations of a coalition strategy before the war. Any contractual documents on military cooperation between Russia and England on the eve of the war were not prepared at all. And military relations between Russia and France were built on the basis of the military convention of 1892 and the naval convention of 1912, and therefore provided for only mutual consultations at the beginning.

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linemen of the general staffs. To be fair, consultations were held every year from 1900 to 1913. An analysis of the minutes of the meetings shows that the views of the military leaders had a lot in common, which played a certain positive role in coordinating the strategic plans of both powers???. However, they approached many issues differently. The contradictions between the allies, each of which pursued its own goals in the war and tried to achieve them at the expense of the other, led to the fact that strategic considerations were often subordinated to political tasks, and sometimes they were completely ignored, which could not but affect the overall course of the war.

It is also true that the Allies tried to solve the problems that arose at the military-political conferences in December 1915 and November 1916, when the plans for the 1916 and 1917 campaigns were discussed. But the operational coordination of the actions of the allied forces was still carried out poorly. The unified command of the allied armies of the Entente was created only in 1918, i.e., several months before the end of the war?2, and already without Russia. Meanwhile, throughout the war, she strove to fulfill her obligations in good faith. Thus, in the campaign of 1914, the offensive of the Russian armies in East Prussia helped to thwart the strategic plan of the German command to defeat France and withdraw it from the war. In the campaign of 1916, the transition to the offensive of the South-Western Front earlier than planned made it possible to weaken the onslaught of German troops against France near Verdun and Austro-Hungarian troops against Italy in Tyrol. According to the allies themselves, did the Russians “give more than they promised”? M.

As for England and France, they very often tried to solve their problems at the expense of Russia. clearer

This was most evident in the 1915 campaign, when Germany shifted its main efforts to the Eastern Front in order to defeat the Russian army and withdraw Russia from the war. While its troops repulsed the onslaught of superior enemy forces, the Anglo-French armies did not show much activity on their front. The Allies, as noted by the British historian B. Liddell Hart, "did little to repay Russia for the sacrifices made for them by the latter in 1914"2%. In May 1916, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich asked the commander-in-chief of the French troops, Joffre, to speed up the offensive. Having given their consent, the Anglo-French command nevertheless prepared the promised operation too slowly. The offensive in Champagne and Artois began only in September, when the Russian army was forced to leave Galicia and Poland under pressure from the enemy.

The unexpectedly complex nature of the war and the change in strategic views on its conduct had a great impact on the development of the Russian armed forces, which in turn necessitated the refinement and development of new provisions of the military strategy. Many characteristic features of the military strategy that took shape in those years became the basis for its further development in the Soviet period.

The First World War brought forward a number of prominent Russian military figures. Among them were Generals M.V. Alekseev, A.A. Brusilov, N.I. Ivanov, N.V. Ruzsky, D.G. Sherbachev and others. Unfortunately, many of the names of the heroes were forgotten. Monuments worthy of their design, perpetuating the exploits of Russian soldiers and officers in the war, have not been preserved either. All of them were destroyed after the revolution.

Chapter Two

MILITARY STRATEGY IN THE CIVIL WAR 1917-1922

At the end of October (according to the old style) 1917, the Bolsheviks, relying on armed detachments of workers and soldiers, overthrew the Provisional Government and seized power in their hands in Petrograd. Following this, the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies, controlled by them, relatively quickly established themselves in Moscow and most of the provincial centers of Russia. A new form of statehood was proclaimed in the country - the power of the Soviets. This event caused opposition from political parties and organizations that reflected the interests of those social strata that were losing their dominant or privileged position in economic and political life. Some sought to restore the monarchy, others defended the principles of democracy, seeking the transfer of power in Russia to the Constituent Assembly, and others, in the hope of a better future, followed the Bolsheviks.

The October socialist revolution provoked a sharp international reaction. The leading powers, worried about the collapse of the capitalist foundations in Russia, its separate exit from the world war, and most importantly, the attempts of the Bolsheviks to kindle the fire of the world revolution, openly came out in support of all anti-Bolshevik forces.

All this, combined with the intensified separatist tendencies in the Russian Empire, in an atmosphere of mutual class hatred, the desire of one side to retain the seized power, with no less firm determination on the other side to return what was lost, not to mention the exorbitant ambitions of numerous warring parties, striving to achieve their political goals, very soon led to direct armed confrontation. A bloody civil war spread throughout the vast territory of the country and lasted for a long five years. |

The uncompromising nature of the political goals of the parties involved in the civil war determined its exceptionally violent nature, led to great loss of life, the destruction of the country's national economy, and the deterioration of the material situation of the population. Two main forces clashed in the war: supporters of the communist transformation of society, led by the Bolsheviks, and supporters of the white movement, which included the Cadets, monarchists, liberals, moderate socialists, and other political movements. Behind each of these groups stood a huge

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nye human masses, certain socio-social strata. The Reds were supported by the majority of factory workers, the poorest peasantry and the Cossacks, and some part of the intelligentsia. On the side of the Whites were the bourgeoisie, the landowners, the wealthy Cossacks and the peasantry, the main part of the intelligentsia. The middle peasantry and part of the skilled workers constantly fluctuated. Ultimately, in one way or another, almost the entire able-bodied population of Russia was involved in the war.

An important factor was the fact that from the very beginning, external forces actively intervened in the unfolding struggle - the countries of the Quadruple Alliance, the Entente states, small countries that separated from Russia, as well as various foreign political groups. The alignment of these forces was not unambiguous, because under the influence of many objective and subjective reasons, it changed more than once. This gave the civil war an extremely complex, multifaceted and dynamic character. It intertwined the struggle of internal forces with military intervention, uprisings and rebellions, and nationalist movements.

1. Features of the civil war in Russia and its impact on military strategy

The civil war in Russia developed in accordance with the general patterns characteristic of civil wars of various eras. But at the same time, it also had a number of differences in its goals, political and military content, conditions, forms and methods of struggle.

The main feature of the war was its unparalleled uncompromisingness and ruthlessness. It could not end otherwise than with the complete and undivided victory of one side and the equally unconditional defeat of the other side. The possibility of reconciliation, the conclusion of any, even temporary,

agreements or half-hearted solutions in most cases was completely excluded. The question was unambiguous: who wins? The fight was not for life, but for death. This was caused by the incompatibility of the interests and goals of the opposing groups, the opposition of their ideologies, and the boundless mutual hostility. Hence the utmost decisiveness of military strategy, its offensive character.

This feature of the war was emphasized by the leaders of both sides. "International wars," wrote V. I. Lenin, "always ended in deals between the propertied classes, and only in a civil war does the oppressed class direct its efforts to destroy the oppressing class to the end, to destroy the economic conditions for the existence of this class." Equally, the leaders of the White movement constantly reaffirmed their determination under any conditions to bring the fight against the Bolsheviks to the end?

Thus, the question was not only about the complete destruction of the enemy armed forces, but also the entire political and economic system. This led to the total nature of the war. Accordingly, the military strategy of both sides was aimed at achieving victory at any cost.

Another feature of the civil war lies in its close relationship, on the one hand, with the revolution, and on the other hand, with the military intervention that unfolded from the very beginning of the war. The seizure of power by the Bolsheviks became the main catalyst for the civil war, decisively influenced the alignment of military and social forces in the war, predetermined the close relationship between the struggle on the main fronts and the no less intense struggle in the rear. Moreover, it is characteristic that during the war both

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the parties almost constantly simultaneously acted on numerous external and internal fronts. The latter arose either suddenly or as a result of constantly brewing crises, mass uprisings and rebellions, often spreading over vast areas and naturally requiring the involvement of considerable forces. Therefore, the strategy of both sides more than once faced the task of suppressing insurgent-partisan actions in their rear and at the same time supporting similar actions behind enemy lines, indispensably coordinating operations conducted by regular troops with them.

Since the civil war solved the main question - the question of power, it is no coincidence that throughout its entire duration political and socio-economic tasks took precedence over considerations of a purely strategic nature.

There was an inextricable link between the Civil War and military intervention. The beginning of the intervention dramatically expanded the content, spatial and large-scale scope of the civil war, raised the internal military conflict in Russia to the international level.

The intervention in the war of the Quadruple Alliance, and then the Entente countries, the USA, Japan, which manifested itself at first in the form of providing material and moral assistance to the white movement, very soon resulted in support of its military force. As a result, a kind of alliance, although not formalized, of external and internal anti-Bolshevik forces was formed. But the Bolshevik leadership, for its part, sought to get itself an ally, even if it was temporary, shaky, fragile, unreliable, conditional. For this purpose, peace treaties were concluded with Germany, Estonia and other states.

All this, of course, most decisively reflected on the conditions and development of the political, diplomatic and armed struggle, gave military operations an unusually strong and contradictory character. Accordingly, both sides formed a strategy. Within its framework, elements of coalition strategic actions, coordination of the efforts of armies and armed formations of various national affiliations began to acquire definite importance.

The peculiarity of the war is that the purely formal military alliances were very unstable, they changed depending on many objective circumstances, mainly when conflicting interests collided. To a greater extent this applies to the white movement. In contrast, the Bolshevik leadership managed to create a single state entity - Soviet Russia, with which in June 1919 the nominally existing Ukrainian, Belarusian, Latvian and Lithuanian Soviet republics entered into a military alliance, and most importantly - to form a single armed forces. In the white movement there was no unity of opinion either on the political goals of the war or on the question of the future state structure of Russia; ended in failure and all attempts to create a unified armed forces under a common command. In the camp of the opponents of the Bolsheviks, not only the interests of Germany and the Entente, but also the neighboring countries and the leaders of the White Guard forces clashed sharply. Their unconditional demands for the restoration of a "united and indivisible Russia" caused sharp rejection in the leading circles of Poland, the Lithuanian and Latvian republics, and Finland, which had just separated from the Russian Empire, who saw this as a direct threat to their sovereignty. The consequence of this was their constant maneuvering, their readiness to give up a common goal, i.e., the destruction of Bolshevism, for the sake of their own national benefits.

There was no complete agreement between the Russian White Guard leaders themselves and their armies: there was a sharp struggle for superiority. Armed Forces of the South of Russia,

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Consisting of such politically heterogeneous units as the Volunteer, Don and Kuban armies, it was never possible to unite, because each of them pursued its own goals. The fact is that the leaders of the Don and Kuban Cossacks defended autonomist aspirations, which contradicted the aspirations of the Volunteer Army, which was eager to strike at Moscow. White governments and atamans of various kinds often recognized only themselves.

The Bolsheviks actively used the serious crack formed as a result of this in the white movement and the external forces that supported it. "We," Lenin argued, "won the war not because we were stronger, but because, being weaker, we exploited the enmity between the capitalist states."*

To understand the nature of the civil war in Russia, such a feature as the organic dependence of the course and outcome of the armed struggle on the solution of the peasant, Cossack and national issues is extremely important. It was precisely this that to a large extent predetermined the composition of the warring armies, the mobilization potential of the parties, the degree of intensity of hostilities, and, in the end, the victory of some and the defeat of others.

The Bolsheviks, having published decrees on peace and land, immediately managed to win over the bulk of the peasants and Cossacks, which allowed them to relatively quickly create the Red Army and Navy. However, the food dictatorship introduced in the summer of 1918 and, in accordance with the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR of May 29, a real crusade against the rural bourgeoisie, alienated the majority of wealthy peasants, the so-called middle peasants, from Soviet power. But they made up 60% of the entire rural population. This is one of the main reasons for the failure of mobilizations in the military districts and the growth of desertion in the Red Army. At the beginning of the next year, a significant part of the Cossacks went over to the side of the anti-Bolshevik forces in connection with the unleashed mass terror against the Cossacks, the basis for which was the circular letter of the Organizing Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) dated January 24, 1919. The political loss of the Reds turned into a strategic gain for the Whites: the influx of Cossacks into the ranks of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia increased and, accordingly, their number in the Red Army decreased, which led to a change in the overall balance of forces and allowed the White movement to temporarily seize the strategic initiative.

To no lesser extent, the military strategy was influenced by the national question, which in Russia, due to its multinational composition, has always been very acute. The Bolsheviks approached it more prudently and far-sightedly, at least in propaganda, while the White Guard leaders recklessly continued their former great-power course.

It is also true that in the civil war the influence of politics on the balance of power was far from unambiguous. At its various stages, the positive and negative aspects appeared in an unusual combination. Thus, the proclamation by the Bolshevik Party of the right of nations to self-determination was used in different ways by various political parties and nationalist groups to create sovereign national-territorial formations. Initially, by the end of 1918, there were 10 Soviet republics and communes, 16 republics and governments created in territories not subject to the Bolsheviks, and the positions of these formations, depending on the coming to power of certain forces, changed repeatedly. In turn, this led to serious shifts in the military-political and strategic situation, especially since each republic, creating its own army, occupied either a neutral position or took part in the war on one side or another. Under such conditions, the bodies of political and military leadership of the opposing sides were required to take very strict account of the national

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real moments. The effectiveness of the developed plans for operations and combat actions was directly dependent on the correct forecast of the positions of various national formations and groups, their possible participation in the war as either probable opponents or allies. Great difficulties arose in connection with the lack of certainty in the probable development of events, and, consequently, in the expected alignment of forces. Although the real composition of the regular troops of the parties could be approximated, it was difficult to clearly state in advance which specific force would fight on either side. In principle, this is the general pattern of any civil war, but during the period of the civil war in Russia, it manifested itself especially sharply.

A distinctive feature of that war is a fairly clear geographical delimitation of the parties. The Bolsheviks and the Red Army they created relied mainly on the central, most industrially developed regions. On the contrary, the white movement was based mainly on peripheral areas, mostly agricultural. This was reflected in the potential capabilities of the armed forces of the parties, their staffing, equipment and methods of strategic use in the war.

The fact that Bolshevik Russia was for a long time in the ring of fronts left its mark on its military strategy, for the Red Army operated mainly along internal strategic directions. For the Bolsheviks, it was especially important to establish in a timely manner and correctly where the greatest danger threatens from, in order to concentrate the main forces and means in this direction. With this in mind, it was necessary to determine which enemy should be defeated in the first place, what types of strategic actions should be applied on various fronts, and also what strategic regroupings should be carried out to create the necessary superiority in forces.

In strategic terms, other objective circumstances also directly influenced the nature of the civil war. Thus, both sides had a relatively small composition of the armed forces, which did not allow them to create solid fronts with sufficiently high densities of troops and forces. The armed struggle was conducted simultaneously in several vast theaters of operations, many of which were not operationally prepared and equipped to the required extent. Military operations covered vast areas with different physical-geographical and natural-climatic conditions. The length of the fronts constantly increased, then sharply narrowed. More than once, the main events shifted from one front to another, etc. All this required flexible maneuvering of forces and means, creative thinking, initiative and independence. The absence of a solid front line and the presence of significant gaps in the formation of troops created favorable conditions for the opposing sides to use active, mobile operations, conduct deep strikes and raids on

rear of the enemy. The question was which of the parties would be better able to use their opportunities.

The economic conditions for waging a civil war were exceptionally peculiar. The rear of both sides was equally unstable. Indeed, it could not have been otherwise when the national economy was ruined, many enterprises stopped, there were no sufficient supplies of raw materials and fuel, the railways were working with enormous overstrain, and agriculture was going through a severe crisis. In addition, the existing economic ties in the country were completely disrupted. Moreover, the main industrial complex was torn apart by front lines into many parts. Of the 9,402 Russian military factories in the territory controlled by the White armies, about 3,500 remained. More than 1,900 factories were located in areas occupied by the Red Army.

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Army. However, neither side could use them effectively enough to establish military production. Huge difficulties arose with the use of stockpiles of weapons of the Russian army, a significant part of which was captured by the troops of Germany and its allies. Thus, according to the All-Russian Collegium for the Organization and Management of the Red Army, on April 10, 1918, in the warehouses of Bolshevik Russia there were only 977 artillery pieces of various systems, 4,669 machine guns, about 1.25 million rifles, 2.4 million shells, 512.2 million rounds. White armies had even smaller stocks of weapons.

The Bolshevik leadership tried to find a way out of this situation in the transition to the policy of "war communism" and the militarization of the entire economy. In accordance with the decree of the Central Committee of the RCP(b), the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR, the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense and the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, emergency measures were taken to mobilize the industry of Moscow, Petrograd, Tula, and other industrial centers. And as the white armies were forced out of the eastern and southern regions of the country, more and more factories were involved in the production of weapons and the repair of military equipment. As a result, from the second half of 1918 to 1920. in the Soviet part of Russia, 2.97 million rifles, 20,729 machine guns, 2,770 field guns were produced and repaired; 373.3 million rounds, 10 million rounds*. Nevertheless, this amount of weapons and ammunition was constantly not enough to deploy and support the combat activities of the army and navy. Commander-in-Chief I. I. Vatsetis reported to the Defense Council in May 1919: "Problems of supply are especially acute with rifles and cartridges; the latter, I repeat, is close to disaster, since in two or three months, with decisive actions on the fronts, not a single cartridge may be at our disposal both in the rear and on the fronts"? And yet, the policy of "war communism", ruthless for the population, allowed the Bolsheviks to use the limited material resources of Soviet Russia with maximum efficiency. But it also led to a rigid centralization of administration, forced distribution of consumer goods, a half-starved existence of the population and other deformations, which affected the fluctuations of the peasantry and, to a certain extent, was reflected in the prolongation of the war.

Active, albeit less successful, measures to organize military production were taken by the leadership of the White armies. But faced with the limited production base and the sabotage of the workers, they were never able to overcome the difficulties that arose, and in the last years of the war even provide compensation for the losses incurred. Under these conditions, a course was taken to receive assistance from the Entente countries. Only from October 1918 to the end of 1919. armed forces of Admiral A. V. Kolchak and General A. I. Denikin received from abroad up to 800 thousand rifles, 13 thousand machine guns, over 300 artillery pieces, hundreds of tanks and a huge amount of ammunition⁹. According to Denikin, the main supplies of weapons, equipment and equipment came from England and France, however, as he believes, "in quantities insufficient for the normal supply of our armies, but still it was the main, vital source of their food".

A weak material and technical base limited the combat capabilities of the armed forces of both sides and had a negative effect on the solution of strategic tasks. Nevertheless, both sides managed to successfully carry out quite a few large-scale operations even in those conditions.

The moral factor played a special role in the civil war. It was strictly taken into account, and then used both in the Red Army and in the White movement in the development and conduct of most operations, although the basis for this was different. The Whites fought under the slogans of "defending the faith", "securing the interests of the working people on

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villages", but above all "the preservation of the owners of their rights to land", the privileges of the previously ruling classes. The Red Army, at least as the Bolshevik propaganda claimed, fought "for freedom", the opportunity to "enjoy all the benefits of culture, all the creations of human labor", "for the elimination of all forms of exploitation", for "building a communist society", and also in the hope of "igniting the fire of the world revolution" with their victory. Simple in essence and very in tune with the mood of the disadvantaged Russians, the appeals found a deep response. The leaders of the Bolshevik Party themselves are proud of this, and their enemies are forced to admit it. "The Bolsheviks turned out to be masters in the art of combining actions of a moral order with purely military ones," said the French General Serrigny. "Their military operations in Siberia, Poland, and the Caucasus were always preceded at the right moment by agitation campaigns aimed in parallel to demoralizing the ranks of the army and the masses of the opposing side. The subsequent results were amazing and deserve the deepest study.

All-round attempts to use the moral factor to achieve their goals were made, of course, by the command of the White Guard armies, counting not only on the high morale of most of the officers, but also on dissatisfaction with the Bolshevik policy, which was experienced by a significant part of the peasantry and Cossacks. Often this was possible, especially during the period of success on the fronts. But as soon as the armies of the white regimes suffered defeat, as a rule, their rapid decomposition set in. The fact is that the persistent desire to restore the former order in Russia, the uncertainty of promises, especially by decision of the land

sensible question, repelled the masses of soldiers, gave rise to deserters, and most importantly, contributed to the development of processes of moral decline in the troops. The White Guard leaders themselves were forced to admit this. For example, General Denikin wrote in his memoirs: "Beyond where "military booty" and "requisition" ends, a gloomy abyss of moral decline opens up: violence and robbery. They swept through the North Caucasus, all over the south, all over the Russian theater of the civil war, filling the cup of suffering of the people with new tears and blood, confusing in their minds all the "colors" of the military-political spectrum and more than once erasing the lines that separate the image savior from the enemy ... Have you struggled with the disease? We wrote harsh laws in which the death penalty was the usual punishment... We - ia, and military leaders - gave orders to combat violence and robbery, robbed of prisoners, etc. e. But these laws and orders sometimes met with stubborn resistance from the environment, which did not accept their spirit, their crying necessity"!5.

Equally serious difficulties in using the moral factor were also experienced by the troops of the interventionists, who were forced to fight on foreign soil for goals that were not entirely clear to the broad masses of soldiers. On the other hand, the role of this factor was fully manifested in 1920, when the troops of the Red Army entered the ethnic territory of Poland. The patriotic upsurge in the country, caused by the desire to repel the invasion, became the main condition for the successful mobilization of conscripts in the Polish army and for its deployment.

In general, the strategy of both sides during the civil war in Russia obeyed the general laws of war and the principles of military art. However, in its practical application, not all general laws retained their force. This was emphasized by the military leaders of both sides. So, M. N. Tukhachevsky noted: we want to indicate those new data of the strategy of the civil war, "Without denying the before." He further pointed out that, in contrast eternal foundations of strategy ... which we did not have to take into account to an ordinary war, "a plan for a civil war cannot be drawn up before it begins", that "a civil war, usually starting in

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large size, quickly grows to the size of a big fierce war. It is the special conditions of its conduct that make it possible to "conquer large areas with small forces," and to achieve success in such a war, "more than ever, one must be bold, fast ... one must be able to maneuver ... one must be able to make a scientific and critical analysis of the conditions for waging our war »!°.

And here is what General Denikin wrote about this: "The strategy of an external war has its own laws of war, unchanged, equally inherent in the eras of Caesar, Hannibal, Napoleon and the past world war. But the conditions of the civil war, without overturning the inherent value of immutable laws, violate their relative significance, sometimes to such an extent that in the eyes of a superficial observer the thought doubles: either the law is false, or its grave violation is being committed ... "!".

One of the most important reasons for this situation is the special conditions for the formation and organizational development of the armed forces that took part in the civil war.

2. Creation and development of the armed forces of the opposing sides during the civil war

To wage a civil war in Russia, both sides were forced to actually re-create their armed forces. This does not mean at all that the red and white armies were formed from scratch. In fact, the remnants of the crumbling Russian army, its personnel, personnel, and weapons were used for their deployment. In other words, forces, in essence, were drawn from one source. Nevertheless, the Bolshevik leaders and leaders of the white movement, based on political and ideological guidelines, solved the problem of forming their armies in different ways.

In their decisions and actions, the Bolsheviks were guided by the provisions, once formulated by K. Marx and F. Engels, that for the armed defense of the new society it is necessary to break the bourgeois state machine and create a new military organization of the proletarian state. Although this idea seemed doubtful to many, it was adopted and implemented after the October Revolution by the Soviet government. Initially, it was planned to replace the old army with a proletarian militia. Its prototype was the Red Guard and the revolutionary soldiers and sailors who supported the Bolsheviks, especially since they successfully solved the problem of suppressing anti-Bolshevik revolts. But when a real threat of a German and Austro-Hungarian invasion arose, and then a civil war, it turned out that the Red Guard was neither in its composition (463.1 thousand people)!8, neither in structure, nor in principles acquisition and combat use is not capable of withstanding the regular armed forces. The impromptu detachment organization, weak discipline, the low level of training of command personnel, the low level of training of the majority of the Red Guards, with their insufficient armament, did not allow them to count on success in solving not only strategic, but also major operational tasks. It was all the more absolutely unrealistic to even raise the question of reorganizing and using the Russian army to defend Soviet power, not only because the majority of its officers and part of the soldiers were hostile to the new regime, but also because this army, in essence, by the end of 1917 the city almost completely lost its combat capability due to spontaneous demobilization. The Bolsheviks needed a new army created on a class basis with strict military discipline and centralized control.

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That is why on January 15 (28), 1918, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR adopted a decree "On the organization of the Workers 'and Peasants' Red Army". It specifically emphasized that the Red Army "is being created from the most conscious and organized elements of the working masses." The new army was formed on a volunteer basis, and it was stated that "everyone who is ready to give his strength, his life to defend the gains of the October Revolution, the power of the Soviets and socialism enters the Red Army." Exactly two weeks later, January 29 (11

February 1918, the Council of People's Commissars adopted a decree "On the organization of the Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Red Fleet", which was based on the same principles as the Red Army.

The formation of a new army was entrusted to the All-Russian Collegium under the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs, created on January 15 (28) of the same year. The main source of creating and training reserves for the front was the 1st Corps of the Red Army, which was formed at the end of January in Petrograd. By April 20, the Red Army numbered 195.9 thousand people." They then formed its core. However, the influx of volunteers lagged behind the real needs of the state and the conditions of the current situation. The broad masses were too tired from the First World War, and therefore they were reluctant to join the ranks of the armed forces. In addition, the volunteer principle hampered the planned preparation of replacements and did not allow the creation of the necessary reserves. That is why it lasted only until the summer of 1918.

Even more serious difficulties arose with the staffing of the Red Army with qualified personnel of the operational-strategic level. Under such conditions, the Bolshevik leadership was forced to make a decision to recruit officers and generals of the Russian army for military service. On December 27, 1917 (January 9, 1918), the People's Commissar of War issued an order according to which the officers of the headquarters, departments and institutions of the military department were dismissed from the army only if the positions they held could be replaced without prejudice by suitably trained persons?'. On July 10, 1918, the mobilization of former officers was announced. As a result, by mid-January of the following year, the share of military specialists, as they were then called, in the Red Army amounted to more than 75% of the total number of command personnel. Of the 250 thousand officers and generals of the old Russian army, 75 thousand people served in the Red Army. In order to control the activities of military specialists and exercise political leadership in the army and navy, the institution of military commissars was introduced in March 1918, and in April the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, the All-Byurovovenkom, was created. Subsequently, they were also entrusted with the leadership of party political work in the army and navy. Simultaneously, political bodies are created - political departments and political directorates, endowed with both party and political-administrative functions. It should be noted that they played a rather contradictory role in the formation and development of the Red Army.

It is hard to disagree with M. V. Frunze, who wrote: "Who introduced elements of order and discipline into the ranks of our young red regiments, formed under the thunder of cannon shots? Who, in the hours of failure and defeat, supported the courage and vigor of the fighters and poured new energy into their shattered ranks? Who organized the rear of the army, planted Soviet power there and created the Soviet order, thus ensuring the rapid and successful advance of our armies? Who, by their persevering and stubborn work, disintegrated the ranks of the enemy, upset his rear, and thus prepared the future successes? This was done by the political organs of the army, and they did it, I must say, brilliantly. Their merits in the past are immeasurable"?"

But at the same time, political bodies often fettered the creative activity of command cadres and headquarters, instilled uncertainty in making decisions.

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Gradually, life itself forced the Bolsheviks to move in the construction of the Red Army to the principles of organization and development of regular armed forces generally accepted throughout the civilized world. An important step in this direction was the decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of May 29, 1918 "On the forced recruitment into the worker-peasant Red Army" and the decree of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of July 10, 1918 "On the organization of the Red Army" ?. In addition, other political and organizational measures were taken. Among them, the formation of military districts with a developed network of local military administration, the abolition of the election of command personnel in the army and navy, the introduction of the "socialist oath", the organization of a system of universal military training, the creation of central bodies of military leadership, etc.

Of great importance in overcoming the remnants of partisanship in the Red Army were the decisions of the US Congress of the RCP (b), held in March 1919. The Congress resolutely rebuffed the "military opposition", which opposed the creation of a regular army, the introduction of iron military discipline and the involvement of military specialists st. The resolution on the military question and the military section of the program of the RCP(b) adopted by the congress clearly pointed out the need to create a regular Red Army, trained, armed and organized according to the latest military science. It was noted that the army should have centralized control and be built on a strictly class basis. Priority was given to the training and education of commanders from workers and peasants, the development of new military regulations, the organization of military training for workers, etc. 2 °

Already by the beginning of 1919, the Armed Forces of the RSFSR acquired clear organizational forms. They included the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army (RKKA), the Naval Forces of the Republic (the Workers' and Peasants' Red Fleet), internal service and auxiliary troops, and reserve troops. The main backbone of the Armed Forces was the Red Army, which was divided into the active (field) army and the troops of the internal military districts. At the same time, their total number many times exceeded the number of combat personnel of the troops of the army in the field. So, in January 1919, the Armed Forces of the RSFSR had 788.3 thousand people, to | December - 3 million, to | november

1920 - 5.4 million people *. At the same time, in the active army, respectively, there were: in February 1919 - 383.2 thousand bayonets and sabers, in November - 410 thousand, in November 1920 - 778 thousand? Troops of internal military districts in February

in 1919, there were 60 thousand bayonets and sabers, and in June of the same year - 36.8 thousand.28

The main branch of the Red Army troops was the infantry (from October 1918 - rifle troops), which constituted | | January 192] over 88% of the total strength of the Red Army." The most important directions in its development were a gradual increase in strike force and firepower, an increase in the maneuverability of units and formations,

The highest tactical formation was the rifle division, which consisted of three rifle brigades. In October 1918, the active army had 30 infantry divisions, and in September 1919, 62 rifle divisions⁷⁰. In total, during the war years, 199 formations and reorganizations of rifle formations took place. According to the staff in 1919, a rifle division was supposed to have about 60 thousand people, 500 machine guns, 116 guns. However, in real life, the divisions averaged 15-20 thousand people (8-10 thousand active bayonets), 250-350 machine guns, 30-40 guns and 3-4 thousand horses.

The main mobile arm of the army was the cavalry. Its intensive formation began in the autumn of 1919. The following year, its strength was already 3.86% of the total strength of the Red Army. The main directions in the development

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The aim of the cavalry was to increase the strike force, operational-tactical independence, maneuverability and the gradual enlargement of formations. On average, a cavalry division (2 cavalry brigades, 2 cavalry regiments each) had 3,500–4,500 sabers, 200 machine guns, 12 guns, and 3,000–6,000 horses. Subsequently, part of the cavalry divisions was united into cavalry corps, and then into cavalry armies (1st and 2nd), 3-4 cavalry divisions each. This made it possible not only to successfully resist the large cavalry formations of the White armies, but also to solve the problems of developing operational success into a strategic one in the most important theaters of military operations.

In the course of the war, the role of artillery steadily increased. In the Russian army by October 1917, there were about 18 thousand guns. However, the main part of them was captured by the German interventionists during the offensive in February 1918. Colossal efforts were required to recreate artillery as a branch of service in the conditions of the strongest devastation in the national economy. During the years of the civil war, its number in the Red Army continuously increased. So, if in May 1918 in the army there were about 300, then by May 1919 - 2,050 guns, and by the end of 1920 - 2,790 guns.

By that time, artillery was already 2.8% of the total number of the Red Army. It was divided into military, army, anti-aircraft and the reserve of the High Command - heavy artillery for special purposes (TAON). Its main organizational units were artillery battalions (2 guns each), and in TAON - brigades intended to reinforce armies and fronts.

Anti-aircraft artillery was represented mainly by separate horse-drawn batteries. In addition, there were 7 batteries on mechanical traction and 3 batteries on railway platforms. All of them were the means of army commanders and were mainly used to cover the most important objects. In the troops, the fight against an air enemy was carried out directly with rifle fire from subunits or machine guns specially adapted for firing at air targets.

The maneuverable nature of the civil war required the creation of armored forces in the Red Army, which included armored trains, armored and autotank detachments, infantry landing detachments, aeronautical detachments attached to armored trains, and other units. During the war years, these forces continuously developed. If by the end of 1918 the Red Army had only 23 armored trains and 23 armored detachments, then two years later their number increased to 122 and 5532, respectively. During the war, 90 tanks were captured from the White Guards and interventionists, of which 11 autotank detachments were formed. Armored forces were used mainly in important areas as a reinforcement of rifle and cavalry formations, as well as for solving independent tasks.

Engineering units accounted for 2.76% of the total strength of the Red Army. Basically, they were used centrally by the front and army command. Construction units (military field construction) were used to carry out defensive work in the army and front-line rear.

An integral part of the Red Army was the Air Force (Workers 'and Peasants' Red Air Fleet). Its number did not exceed 0.42% of the total army, nevertheless, it solved important tasks in supporting ground troops and fleet forces. The composition of the Air Force constantly increased. If in November 1918 it included only 38 air squadrons, by the spring of 1919 their number had increased to 61, and in December 1920 to 83 squadrons (including 18 naval squadrons). In total, during the years of the civil war, up to 350 aircraft operated simultaneously on the fronts.

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To carry out operational and operational-strategic tasks, units of the active army were reduced to large formations.

The main operational unit of the active army was the combined arms (field) army. It usually included from 3 to 5, and sometimes up to 12 divisions. The combat and strength of the army troops at certain stages of the war, as well as depending on the importance of the operational areas in which they operated, was different. So, in 1918 and the first half of 1919, it ranged from 5 to 30 thousand bayonets and sabers, from 100 to 900 machine guns, from 90 to 120 guns, 1-2 armored trains; in subsequent years, the army numbered from 50 to 140 thousand people, from 50 to 160 guns, from 330 to 1,100 machine guns, from 5 to 10 armored trains. In total, during the years of the civil war, 22 combined-arms and 2 cavalry armies were formed, of which from 9-10 to 15-18 armies simultaneously operated on various fronts.

The front was the strategic unification of the Red Army. It usually deployed on a specific

theater of operations, in one or more strategic directions. Depending on the situation and the importance of the theater, the front most often included 2-6 field armies, sometimes 1-2 cavalry armies. The total number of front troops, as a rule, ranged from 150 to 500 thousand people. In total, 12 fronts were formed during the war. The main ones were Eastern, Southern, Southwestern, Western, Caucasian, Northern and Turkestan. The command of the armies, depending on the victories or defeats won, changed very often. A similar picture was observed with the change of command of the fronts. Former colonels V.M. Gitis, A.I. Egorov, S.S. Kamenev, V.I. Shorin, generals V.N. Egoriev, P.P. Sytin, lieutenant M.N. Tukhachevsky, as well as volunteer M.V. Frunze.

Despite the continental character of the theaters of the civil war, the Bolsheviks attached great importance to the creation of naval forces. By the fall of 1917, the Russian fleet had over 100 warships and auxiliary vessels. However, due to the invasion of the interventionists, the RSFSR was cut off from most of the seas. By 1919, the Russian Navy actually consisted of one Baltic Fleet, which included 2 battleships, 2 cruisers, 24 destroyers, 6 submarines and various ships. During the years of the civil war, more than 30 sea, river and lake military flotillas were formed. The largest of them were: Volga, Caspian, Dnieper, Onega, Severo-Dvinskaya and Azov. Together with the troops of the fronts, the flotillas took part in offensive and defensive operations, fought against enemy ships, and disrupted his communications.

Internal service troops were used to protect the rear of the country, combat sabotage in transport and industry, and anti-Bolshevik uprisings. Auxiliary troops (about 180,000 infantry in June 1919) included the border guard, troops of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (VChK), guard units, troops for the protection of waterways and sugar production, railway defense and protection of railways, and food armies. At the end of 1920, auxiliary troops included aviation, armored, railway, automobile, stage troops (military units for the protection and maintenance of military roads of the army in the field) and signal troops³⁵. They took part in hostilities, solved the tasks of ensuring the transportation of military cargo and the maintenance of military roads. Reserve troops (armies, regiments, battalions) were intended to prepare marching replacements for the army in the field.

In general, the Armed Forces of the RSFSR, created during the civil war, basically corresponded to their purpose and the conditions for conducting military operations. They outnumbered the enemy in composition, equipment, and in some cases morale. A characteristic feature of the Armed Forces is the social composition resulting from

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from the balance of class forces in the country. A distinctive feature of the Red Army was also the political party bodies and the role they played in it. By the end of 1920, the share of workers was 15%, peasants - 77%, representatives of other social groups - 8%, and the party and Komsomol stratum in the army and navy - about 7%. Representatives of almost 50 nationalities fought in the ranks of the Armed Forces, of which 77.6% were Russians, 13.7% were Ukrainians, 4% were Belarusians, and 4.7% were other nationalities³. Despite the changed social and national composition, it was still the same Russian army with national traditions inherited from their ancestors, but fighting for other socio-political goals than before.

What forces opposed it in the civil war on the other side?

The formation of the White armies began immediately after the October Revolution. The peculiarity of their construction was that in the first two years, depending on the place of formation, the presence of conscription and volunteer contingent, weapons and military equipment, military control bodies, first of all, units were created, and only then units and formations that were brought together in the army. In a number of cases, army formations were immediately formed with characteristic features inherent in regular troops. Late 1918 and early 1919 armed organizations of various state formations began to be created.

In the South of Russia, in November 1917, under the leadership of General M.V. Alekseev, the Alekseevskaya military organization began to form from officers, cadets, students and high school students, and in January of the following year it was deployed into the Volunteer Army. By the beginning of 1919, this army included the 1st, 2nd and 3rd army, Crimean-Azov volunteer, 1st and 2nd Kuban cavalry corps. In January 1919, the Volunteer Army was renamed the Caucasian Volunteer Army, and from May 1919 it was again the Volunteer Army. In June, it included the 1st Army and 2nd Cavalry Corps, the 2nd Kuban Plastunskaya Separate Brigade and separate units. The army lasted until December 1919, when, due to heavy losses, its troops were reduced to the Volunteer Corps, from January 1920 - the Separate Volunteer Corps.

In the Don region, under the leadership of General P. N. Krasnov, who adhered to a pro-German orientation, since May 1918, the Don (active) army began to be created on the basis of universal military service. In June, it included 6 operational groups with a total strength of 27,000 bayonets and 30,000 sabers, with 175 guns, 610 machine guns, 4 armored trains and 20 aircraft. At the same time, a standing army was formed, called "young", because it consisted of Cossacks 19-20 years of age, and the Southern Army (3 corps). The latter, numbering no more than 9 thousand bayonets, at the beginning of 1919 became part of the Volunteer Army. At the same time, Generals Krasnov and Denikin signed an agreement according to which the Don Army was operationally subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief of the newly created Armed Forces of the South of Russia (VSYUR). In May 1919, the Don Army was reorganized. Now it included the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Don, and a little later the 4th separate buildings. It included 56 light and horse artillery batteries, as well as an armored train brigade, armored vehicles and aircraft.

The armed forces of the South of Russia (Commander-in-Chief - General Denikin), in addition to the Volunteer and Don armies, included the Crimean-Azov Volunteer and Caucasian (from February 1920 - Kuban) armies,

troops of the Trans-Caspian (separate Turkestan army) and Kiev regions, the Terek-Dagestan region (since August 1919, the troops of the North Caucasus), the forces of the Black Sea Fleet, the Caspian Sea and several river military flotillas.

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The deployment of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia was largely dependent on the help of the Entente powers. So, in 1919 alone, England provided them with 198,000 rifles, 6,177 machine guns, 500 million rounds of ammunition, | 121 guns, more than 1.9 million shells, about 60 tanks and 168 aircraft. In turn, France and the United States, according to incomplete data, sent General Denikin 105.5 thousand rifles, 47 machine guns, more than 3.2 million rounds of ammunition.

The combat and numerical strength of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia has been constantly changing throughout the entire period of their existence. If at the beginning of 1919 they numbered 118 thousand bayonets and cavalry, then at the end of July - 104.5 thousand bayonets and 50.9 thousand cavalry, and by the beginning of 1920, after their crushing defeat during the general offensive of the Southern and the South-Eastern Fronts of the Red Army - 61.4 thousand bayonets and 36.2 thousand sabers. In March 1920, the Armed Forces of the South of Russia were finally defeated, most of them surrendered to the Red Army, and the rest, with the help of the interventionist fleet, crossed over to the Crimea. On April 4, General Denikin, having resigned as Commander-in-Chief, appointed General P. N. Wrangel as his successor.

The main operational unit of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia was the army. It received its name by the method of recruitment (Volunteer) or by the place of formation and operations (Donskaya, Kavkazskaya). The army (with the exception of a separate Turkestan army, which included divisions and brigades) usually consisted of 3-4 corps, including | 2 cavalry (horse) 33. The Volunteer Army, which had a small number of its own cavalry, was sometimes given operational control over several cavalry (cavalry, Cossack) divisions or 1-2 cavalry corps from the Don and Caucasian armies.

The highest tactical unit was the corps (army, cavalry, cavalry). The army corps consisted of 3-4 infantry (including 1-2 rifle) divisions, infantry (rifle) and cavalry (cavalry) regiments, separate infantry battalions*. The main striking force of the ground forces was the cavalry (horse) corps, the creation of which the White Guard command paid great attention to. This was facilitated by a sufficient number of well-trained Cossack troops, which had numerous cadres of cavalry officers. The cavalry (cavalry) corps included 2-3 cavalry (cavalry, Cossack) divisions. In a number of cases, 1-2 infantry divisions were attached to the cavalry (cavalry) corps.

Infantry (rifle), cavalry (cavalry, Cossack) divisions were tactical formations. An infantry (rifle) division included 2-4 infantry (rifle) regiments, sometimes 1-2 cavalry (mounted) regiments, as well as artillery and technical units. The cavalry (cavalry, Cossack) division consisted of 3-4 cavalry (cavalry, Cossack) regiments. Sometimes a cavalry (cavalry, Cossack) division included a rifle regiment, separate infantry, artillery, cavalry and technical units.

Compared with other White Guard armies, the Armed Forces of the South of Russia were rightfully considered the most powerful formations in terms of composition, training, technical equipment and combat capability. At the same time, significant disagreements, on the one hand, between the Don and Kuban Cossacks, and on the other hand, between their leaders and General Denikin - on the issues of the state system of Russia, land and national issues - weakened the unity of the All-Union Socialist Republic, which, of course, affected on guiding them. And the eternal concern for their rear forced the White Guard command to send regular military units and formations to pacify it.

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Sufficiently strong armies were created in the east of Russia. Their formation was facilitated by the miscalculations made by the Bolsheviks: the Siberian peasantry, not having received real support from the new government, did not immediately take their side, and the wealthy peasants were generally hostile to the forced requisitions of bread. In addition, it must be taken into account that Siberia is too remote from the largest industrial centers, and the Siberian working class was small; a large share in that region belonged to the Cossacks, who were striving to preserve their independence at all costs. The base for the deployment of the armed forces in the east of Russia was 6 corps, which were deployed in Siberia even before the First World War"?

A feature of the construction of the armed forces in this theater of operations in 1918 was that they were created by various state formations, and therefore were completely independent, differing from each other both in organizational and staffing, and in material and technical terms. Already at the beginning of 1918, in the Far East, with the help of English officers, the formation of detachments began under the command of Yesaul of the Transbaikalian Cossacks G.M. Semenov and Ataman of the Ussuri Cossacks Yesaul I.M. Kalmykov. In Harbin, on the territory of China, the creation of detachments was carried out under the leadership of General D. L. Khor Wat, in whose government Admiral A. V. Kolchak headed the military department.

In June 1918, the West Siberian Separate Army was formed (Middle Siberian, Steppe Siberian, Ural Army Corps), soon renamed the Siberian Army, which lasted until the end of December 1918 ... In

April 1918 created the Ural (from January 1919 - the Ural separate), in October - the South-West (from December 1918 - a separate Orenburg, and from May 1919 - the South separate, from September - again the Orenburg), in June - People

naya army of the Committee of members of the Constituent Assembly (Komuch), in December - Siberian, in January 1919 -

Western army.

The process of unification of all these armies began in November 1918 after Admiral Kolchak came to power, who became the Supreme Ruler and Supreme Commander of all the land and sea armed forces of Russia. In June of the following year, he issued an order to create a unified Russian (Russian) army, which was supposed to have about 1.3 million officers, officials, combatant and non-combatant soldiers and volunteers." From Great Britain to the Russian Army from October 1918 to October 1919. 600,000 rifles, 6,831 machine guns, 192 guns, 346 million cartridges were delivered, and from the USA - 393,000 rifles, 15.6 million cartridges, 100 aircraft®.

The Russian army included the Siberian (in July 1919 it was divided into 1st and 2nd Siberian armies), Western (from June 1919 - 3rd), Southern separate (from September 1919 - Orenburg) armies, the Far Eastern and Semirechensk groups of forces, a separate Siberian Cossack corps, 5 regular infantry divisions, 3 consolidated infantry and regular cavalry brigades, and the Ural separate army was operationally subordinate. In May-July 1919, in order to improve the command and control of the troops that took part in the battles with the Red Army, Admiral Kolchak formed strategic formations - the Eastern, Northern and North-Western fronts.

As the main operational association of the army, there were two types - field and Cossack. The field army (Siberian, Western) included 4-5 army (in the Western army, another mountain) corps, and the Cossack army (Orenburg, Ural) - 2-3 Cossack corps. The army (mountain) corps included 2-3 rifle (infantry, mountain) divisions, a separate infantry brigade, sometimes 1-2 cavalry (Cossack) brigades, infantry, cavalry (Cossack) regiments.

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The Russian army was clearly weakened by the lack of experienced command personnel. Therefore, along with the recruitment of volunteer officers under the age of 50, measures were taken to train command personnel in military educational institutions. At the Irkutsk and Khabarovsk military schools, at the Vladivostok military school and the Omsk ensign school, middle-level commanders were trained for the infantry, at the Omsk aviation school for aviation, and at the Vladivostok officer school for the navy. Officers for the senior and senior levels of command were trained at the accelerated courses of the Academy of the General Staff operating in Tomsk

After the defeat of the troops of Admiral Kolchak by the Red Army in the winter of 1920, their remnants withdrew to Transbaikalia, where the Far Eastern Army (troops of the Russian eastern outskirts) of General G. M. Semenov was concentrated. This army in November 1920 was forced to retreat to South Primorye, in May 1921 it was renamed the militia reserve, and in November - the White Rebel Army*.

In the North of Russia, separate subdivisions and units were also initially created. which are then combined into compounds. However, the distrust of the local population in the interventionists, and, consequently, in those who supported them, led to the fact that by January 1919 the number of Russian troops in the Northern Region amounted to only 9.4 thousand bayonets and cavalry." Therefore, the formation of units from among the Red Army soldiers who were taken prisoner began, which made it possible to bring the number of troops in the North to 25 thousand people.

In May, Admiral Kolchak appointed General E. K. Miller as Commander-in-Chief of all land and sea forces on the Northern Front. It consisted of 6 rifle brigades, the Slavic-British Legion and the aviation corps, as well as the flotilla of the Arctic Ocean and 2 river military flotillas. 6 thousand machine guns". In the same month, when Arkhangelsk was taken by units of the Red Army, the troops of the Northern Region ceased to exist.

In the north-west of Russia, with the support of the German command, in the summer of 1918, the formation of the Northern Army, the Iron Division and volunteer rifle battalions began. In October, it was they, with the exception of the Iron Division, that formed the basis of the Separate Pskov Volunteer Corps of the Northern Army under the command of General A.E. Vandam. At the end of November, this corps, having been defeated in battles with units of the Red Army, retreated to Estonian territory. where it was reorganized into a separate building. Until July 1919, it was subordinate to the Estonian command, and then it was deployed to the Northern (North-Western) Army. Great Britain sent her 30 thousand rifles, 20 million rounds of ammunition, 32 guns, 4 tanks, 6 aircraft and 59 thousand shells. The army consisted of 2 rifle (from October 1919 - army) corps, a rifle division, artillery, armored and technical units. In total, there were 17.8 thousand bayonets, 700 sabers, 500 machine guns, 56 guns, 4 armored trains, 2 armored cars and 6 tanks * '.

The North-Western Army was subordinate to General N. N. Yudenich, Commander-in-Chief of all land and sea armed forces of the North-Western Front, formed on the orders of Admiral Kolchak in June 1919. The army was mainly formed on a volunteer basis. However, she did not differ in high combat effectiveness. And there are many reasons for this: serious disagreements among the senior command staff; strained relations with the Estonian government, which significantly reduced supplies to the White Guard troops; lack of weapons, ammunition and vehicles; fragile rear due to the neutral, and sometimes openly hostile attitude towards the army of the local population??. At the end of 1919, the Northwestern Army was defeated by the joint efforts of the 7th and 15th Soviet armies,

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and then thrown back to the territory of Estonia, where at the end of January 1920 it finally ceased to exist.

In Riga at the end of 1918, officers of the Russian and German armies were formed into three separate

the Latvians. In January 1919, the Libau Volunteer Rifle Detachment was created in Libau from Russian officers and volunteers, deployed in June into the Volunteer Corps (several detachments, companies, batteries) under the command of A.P. Liven³. In July 1919, the corps became part of the Northwestern Army and was reorganized into the 5th Livny Rifle Division.

In early 1919, in Germany, Colonel P.R. Bermond-Avalov began to form a Separate Volunteer Partisan Detachment from Russian prisoners of war. In July, he was deployed to the Western Volunteer Corps named after Count Keller, which included separate units and subunits. In September, all the White Guard troops concentrated in the Baltic states were consolidated into the Western Volunteer Army, which became part of the North-Western Front. The army included the 1st and 2nd Western Volunteer Corps, the Iron Division, the German Legion, the corps of Colonel Dibich and separate units with a total number of about 45 thousand officers and soldiers with 600 machine guns, 100 guns, 3 armored trains, 10 armored vehicles and 120 airplanes." In October, the army was withdrawn from the Northwestern Front, and already in December it ceased to exist.

In the Crimea, General Wrangel, who replaced General Denikin in May 1920, reorganized the remnants of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia into the Russian Army. It included the 1st and 2nd army, Don and cavalry corps, a group of special forces. In September, they were deployed to the 1st (1st Army, Don and Cavalry Corps) and 2nd (2nd and 3rd Army Corps) armies with a total strength of up to 35,000 officers and soldiers⁵.

The army corps, as the highest tactical formation, included 2-3 infantry divisions, 1-2 cavalry (cavalry) divisions or brigades. The cavalry corps included 2 cavalry and foot divisions, as well as an artillery battalion. The infantry (foot) division was a tactical formation. It had 3 infantry regiments, an artillery brigade, a cavalry battalion and a reserve battalion. Cavalry (Cossack) divisions consisted of 2 brigades and a reserve cavalry regiment. Due to the lack of horses, many cavalry units were forced to operate partly or even completely on foot.

The armored forces were consolidated into separate detachments, which were attached to the cavalry divisions. Aviation was represented by 8 aviation detachments and groups. The navy included ships of various classes from the former Russian Black Sea Fleet, including battleships, cruisers, and destroyers. A flotilla operated on the Sea of Azov, which included gunboats, floating batteries, and patrol ships.

Unlike all other White Guard formations, the Russian army of Wrangel was small in number. So, at the beginning of October 1920, it numbered 41.3 thousand bayonets and 17.2 thousand cavalry." This shortcoming was hoped to be compensated by the development of technical branches of the armed forces, created both at the expense of supplies from the allies, and at the expense of local production. In September 1920, for example, a batch of armored vehicles based on Dorman-Ducrot trucks was produced, and motorcycle units were formed. Wrangel's army received a significant amount of military equipment from England. At the beginning of October 1920, it was equipped with 988 machine guns, 249 guns, 19 armored trains, 19 tanks, 26 armored vehicles and 34 aircraft*. However, the lack of fuel and lubricants and a weak repair base limited the combat use of technical means.

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This army was distinguished by iron discipline, which its command supported by the most ruthless methods. At the same time, the constant hidden struggle between the generals of the former Russian army and young officers, the unwillingness of forcibly mobilized soldiers to fight, complete dependence on the supply of weapons, equipment and ammunition from the outside, undermined its strength from the inside.

In addition to those listed above, the Bolsheviks were opposed by the armies of the states that until 1917 were part of the Russian Empire, as well as the troops of the Entente and the Quadruple Alliance.

In Estonia, by the end of November 1918, on the basis of universal military service and volunteering, the People's Army was formed. In December 1919, it included 3 infantry divisions, several separate infantry regiments and battalions, an armored train division and an aviation detachment. At the beginning of 1919, the Southern Group began to be created on the territory of Latvia, and the Northern Group of the Latvian Army began to be created in Estonia. By the summer of 1920, it included 3 infantry divisions, hussar and artillery regiments, technical units with a total strength of 20.5 thousand bayonets and 750 cavalry. The Lithuanian army, which consisted of infantry regiments and separate units, numbered almost 10 thousand people⁷.

In Ukraine, the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic by the beginning of 1918 formed the Zaporizhzhya Corps and a number of separate units. After the Ukrainian National Union came to power in November of the same year, S.V. Petlyura was appointed head ataman of the republican troops. After the reorganization carried out by him, the Ukrainian troops included the Zaporizhian Corps, the Siege Corps of the Sich Riflemen, 6 divisions, the Zaporozhian Sich, and several separate units. In the summer of 1919, the active army of the Ukrainian People's Republic numbered 35 thousand bayonets and 10 thousand sabers with 533 machine guns, 177 guns, 9 armored trains, 6 armored vehicles and 26 aircraft. In the autumn of 1920, having been defeated in battles with the Red Army, the remnants of the Ukrainian troops withdrew to the territory of Poland, where they were interned.

At the end of 1918, the government of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic, on the basis of universal military service, began the formation of the Ukrainian Galician Army. It consisted of 3 buildings and numbered about 70 thousand people.' In November 1919, the army became part of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia, then went over to the side of the Red Army, and in April 1920, it joined the troops of the Ukrainian People's Republic. In the autumn of the same year, part of the Ukrainian Galician army was interned in Poland, and part retreated to Transcarpathia.

On the territory of Transcaucasia in 1918, the Muslim, Georgian Army and Separate Armenian Corps were formed. They served as the basis for the creation of the national armies of the Transcaucasian republics. The army of Azerbaijan included 2 infantry and cavalry divisions, the Caspian military flotilla, artillery and technical units, totaling about 25 thousand people. The armed forces of Georgia in 1920 included the regular army (3 infantry and 1 cavalry divisions, 4 artillery and tank divisions, an armored detachment), the fleet (19 ships) and the People's Guard (24 battalions, a cavalry regiment and an artillery brigade) with a total strength of 30 thousand people. In Armenia in June 1920, the army included 4 infantry and 3 cavalry brigades, 6 artillery battalions, technical units, and in total more than 29 thousand bayonets and sabers, 325 machine guns and 77 guns.

The governments of the countries of the Quadruple Alliance and the Entente, providing economic, financial and military assistance to the leaders of the white regimes and independent republics, simultaneously sent their troops to Russia. They solved various problems. In addition to participating in hostilities, mainly in the west, north and south, they guarded rear communications and ensured the transportation of military supplies.

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The most powerful grouping was the troops of Germany and Austria-Hungary, concentrated on the Eastern Front, and numbering more than 1.7 million people, 92.5 infantry and 18 cavalry divisions. They were represented by 3 army groups and a field army (3-6 army and 1-2 cavalry corps). After the November revolution in Germany in 1918, its troops, by agreement with the government of Soviet Russia, were evacuated from the territories they occupied.

Unlike Austria-Hungary and Germany, the Entente countries did not use associations to intervene in Russia. army groups), but formations, including consolidated ones (expeditionary corps, divisions, brigades, legions), units (regiments), subunits (battalions, detachments, companies, batteries, platoons).

In the Russian North there were English, Scottish, American, Canadian, French, Austrian, Italian, Serbian, Polish, Finnish units, units and formations. Among them, a large formation was the British Northern Russian Expeditionary Force. In addition, the French and British in temporary service (under contract) had units and units formed from Russian officers. The total number of interventionist troops reached 23.2 thousand people. The British 6th Light Cruiser Squadron (21 ships), as well as 26 French, 17 American and 2 Italian warships operated in the Baltic Sea. In the autumn of 1919, the interventionist units were evacuated to their homeland.

In the South of Russia from March 1919 to March 1920. there were the 47th squadron of the Royal Air Force, a tank detachment of Great Britain, and on the Black Sea in 1920 95 warships of the interventionists * '. In May 1919, the British 27th Infantry Division, artillery and technical units concentrated in the Caucasus. The structure of the French expeditionary forces in the South of Russia included the 1st group of infantry (156th and 30th) divisions, the 4th regiment of African horse rangers, the 21st regiment and the stage battalion of native riflemen, as well as the Indochinese battalion, 10th th regiment of Algerian riflemen, 129th battalion of Senegalese riflemen, artillery and technical units, a total of 8 thousand people. The Greek Expeditionary Corps (2nd and 3rd Infantry Divisions) operating here also numbered about 30 thousand people.

In Finland, the Olonets Volunteer Army (about 3,000 men), the 1st Finnish Volunteer Detachment, and the Northern Boys regiment were formed to conduct combat operations against the Bolsheviks. Simultaneously, in 1919, the Swedish (178 people) and the Danish Baltic (225 people) auxiliary corps® operated on the territory of the Baltic states.

The Polish army was formed mainly with the help of France. It was based on: 3 brigades formed during the First World War by the Austrian command; 5 divisions formed in France by General J. Haller from immigrant Poles; 3 corps created in Russia and Ukraine; armed formations of the illegal "Polish Military Organization", headed by J. Pilsudski, who in November 1918 became the Supreme Commander of the Polish Army. At the beginning, the Polish army was created by recruiting volunteers, but in January 1919, in accordance with the Charter on universal military service. At the same time, the Poznan (Greater Poland) Army was formed from regular Polish officers and soldiers who had previously served in the German army." In August 1919, she was subordinated to Pilsudski.

Military service was composed of active (service in the standing army, reserve, reserve, regional defense, general armament) and auxiliary services. Until March 1920, there were no permanent army formations in the Polish armed forces, but there were operational groups consisting of an infantry division and a cavalry brigade or 4 infantry divisions that were part of the fronts. In March, the Polish command began to deploy its armed forces. All troops

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were consolidated into 7 armies, and front-line formations were liquidated. In the summer the North-Eastern and South-Eastern fronts were formed, which were then reorganized into the Northern, Middle and Southern Fronts, each with one or three armies. In their composition, troops with a total number of 148.5 thousand people acted against Soviet Russia.

The army was the main operational unit of the ground forces. It included 2-3 infantry divisions, 1 —2 cavalry brigades or cavalry division. During the war, the combat composition of the army, depending on the tasks it solved, changed. So, in August 1920, it included from 2 to 5 infantry divisions, a cavalry brigade or division. Some armies had 2 infantry and 5 cavalry groups."

The highest tactical formation of the Polish army was an infantry division, which included 2 brigades, a cavalry rifle division, a regiment of light and heavy artillery, as well as technical units." IN

The cavalry brigade included 3 regiments, a horse artillery battalion, a telegraph and telephone company, a convoy and service units

The nature of the training of the Polish troops, staffs and commanders was significantly influenced by French officers who were at all command levels - from units and above. To train non-commissioned officers, non-commissioned officer schools were created, and officers - military schools and the school of the General Staff. In addition, there were schools for cadets, machine gunners, sappers, etc.

An active part in the battles with the Red Army was taken by the Separate Czechoslovak and [1st Polish Corps. A separate Czechoslovak corps was formed in Russia in the autumn of 1917 from prisoners of war of the Austro-Hungarian army, defectors, volunteers from Czechs and Slovaks. It consisted of 2 divisions and a reserve brigade with a total strength of about 30,000 people. After the conclusion of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the corps was declared an autonomous part of the French army. In May-August 1918, together with the White Guard detachments, he raised an uprising. In December, he was taken away from the front, and in February 1919 he was renamed the Czechoslovak Army. Its units carried out the task of protecting the Siberian railway. In 1920, the army was evacuated to their homeland through Vladivostok. From July 1917 to May 1918, there was the 1st Polish Corps of Legionnaires (3 infantry divisions), numbering up to 25 thousand people. He did not take an active part in hostilities.

The troops of the interventionists were distinguished by heterogeneity both in their composition and in morale. German units showed high combat readiness. With the help of skillfully organized propaganda, they were instilled with the idea of the need to occupy Russia, allegedly in order to protect the interests of their own state and save the Russian people from the Bolsheviks. For the troops of the Entente countries, the most distinguishing feature is a high level of technical equipment, but the soldiers, as well as the officers, were not eager to die on foreign soil. Many were tormented by the same question: why did they end up in Russia? The obvious dissatisfaction of the personnel with the armed struggle against the Russian people forced the command of the Entente troops to use them mainly for rear and security services.

Thus, extremely diverse groupings of troops operated on the fronts of the civil war in Russia on both sides, differing sharply in their combat composition, equipment and level of combat capability. Their numbers and status were constantly changing. Advantages were sought by one side or the other. The balance of power fluctuated widely. First in one, then in another region, an acute crisis situation was created. This predetermined the complex nature of military strategy, its dynamism, phased development with repeated changes in the forms and methods of armed struggle, the transition of the initiative from the Red

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Armies to white armies and vice versa. The goals of the strategy were forced to be commensurate with the capabilities of the parties, but sometimes they went beyond these limits. With all this, great skill was required to turn potential possibilities into reality.

3. Bodies of strategic leadership of the armed forces and the nature of their activities

In the process of creating and developing strategic leadership bodies, both sides used all the most valuable from past experience. At the same time, the system of organs for directing the armed struggle, created during the years of the civil war, had significant differences. This is especially true of Soviet Russia, where all the problems of military policy and economy, the development of the Armed Forces were solved under the direct supervision of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) and its Politburo. This approach is due to the fact that the Bolshevik Party was the ruling political party, and therefore its central bodies constantly kept all aspects of the country's life under their unrelenting control. At the plenums of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) and meetings of its Politburo, issues related to the preparation of the defeat of the White armies, including Admiral Kolchak, were sometimes considered (plenums of the Central Committee of April 13 and May 4, Politburo meeting of April 23, 1919), General Denikin (decisions of the July and September plenums of the Central Committee, the Politburo of October 15 and November 14, 1919) and others. fleets) to achieve the goals that the political leadership put forward.

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party took steps to ensure strictly centralized leadership of the military operations of the Red Army on numerous fronts. Through the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Council of People's Commissars, the Defense Council, as well as through members of the Communist Party in the army and navy, the Central Committee of the RCP (b) directed and controlled the activities of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, the High Command, the Political Directorate of the Revolutionary Military Council and other bodies of the highest military command. Members of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) were members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, Revolutionary Military Councils of the fronts and armies, state bodies in charge of the mobilization of human reserves and material resources, traveled to the fronts and to the rear as authorized by the Central Committee to carry out important military tasks. In addition, the Central Committee was directly involved in the transfer of party cadres to military work and their distribution.

In the period between party congresses and plenums, the Politburo carried out the concretization of the main directives of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) and the development of instructions arising from them to the bodies of strategic leadership on military issues. Decisions, directives, instructions of the Politburo were formulated, as a rule, by V. I. Lenin and L. D. Trotsky (Bronstein), and already on behalf of the Politburo they sent them to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic and to the fronts with their signature or the signature of three or four members of the Politburo .

Headed by Lenin, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR, in accordance with the decree on the creation of the Red Army of January 15 (28), 1918, was the "supreme governing body" of the Red Army. Direct management and management

The army was carried out by the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs through the All-Russian Collegium. At the same time, the Council of People's Commissars was engaged in solving problems of organizing the material and technical support of the Armed Forces. In order to introduce a military regime in the military industry, food and transport affairs, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on November 30, 1918 established the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense. Its members included

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Lenin (chairman), representatives of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, People's Commissariats of Communications, Food, etc. During the war, the Defense Council, endowed with military-economic functions, also solved other tasks depending on the situation in the country and on the fronts. At its meetings, reports from the Commander-in-Chief were periodically heard on the strategic position of the republic, the nature of upcoming operations, the state of strategic reserves and army supplies, measures to strengthen the fronts, etc.

The direct leadership of the armed struggle was carried out by specially created bodies that went through a complex and contradictory path of development. In the first weeks after the Bolsheviks came to power, the troops on the fronts were controlled by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all the land and sea forces of the Russian Republic, General N.N. Dukhonin through the headquarters of the Supreme High Command, headed by General M.D. Bonch-Bruевич.

On October 26 (November 8), 1917, by decree II of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, the Committee for Military and Naval Affairs was formed, which on November 3 (16) was transformed into the Council of People's Commissars for Military and Naval Affairs. The Council was entrusted with the task of democratizing the old military apparatus, controlling the War Ministry and breaking it down, and demobilizing the old army. The Council included Lieutenant V.A. Antonov-Ovseenko, sailor P.E. Dybenko, ensign N.V. Krylenko, representatives of the Military Organization under the Central Committee of the Party, the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee. Subsequently, the structure and functions of the Council were specified. On November 9 (22), Krylenko was appointed Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all land and sea forces of the Russian Republic. On November 14 (27) Dybenko headed the Supreme Maritime Board, and on November 21 (December 4) he was appointed People's Commissar for Maritime Affairs. N. I. Podvoisky, appointed on November 11 (24) as Deputy

commissar for military affairs.

Along with the above structures, other bodies of the highest military leadership were also created. So, on October 26 (November 8), the Naval Revolutionary Committee was formed, on November 10 (23) - the Bureau of Commissars of Aviation and Aeronautical Units of the Petrograd Garrison, on December 20, 1917 (January 2, 1918) - the All-Russian Collegium for Air Fleet Management. Under the Headquarters of the Supreme Commander, on November 9 (22), 1917, the Provisional Military Revolutionary Committee (VRC) was created, and the next day, the Revolutionary Field Headquarters for Combating Counter-Revolution, which acted in parallel with the reorganized headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. In December 1917, the Provisional Military Revolutionary Committee at the Headquarters was transformed into the Central Committee of the Armies and Navy in the Field (Tsekodarf), which solved the tasks of directing the life and activities of the armies and navy and supplying them." The functions of leadership of the revolutionary forces in various regions of the country were performed by extraordinary commissars. In December 1917, the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Forces for Combating the Counter-Revolution in the South of Russia was established. In January 1918, the management of the operational activities of the fleet was entrusted to the Naval General Staff.

The presence of numerous governing bodies, their disunity, and the absence of a unified centralized system reduced the effectiveness of strategic management. Therefore, after the decree on the creation of the Red Army, measures were taken to introduce a new system of strategic leadership. However, they did not always correspond to the prevailing situation, which in some cases even led to a violation of the previously created system of strategic leadership. So, in February 1918, Krylenko decided to abolish the Headquarters, and entrust direct command of the troops to the commanders of the fronts." As a result, the troops opposing the Austrian

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Hungarian and German armies could be left without centralized control. General Bonch-Bruевич, being a good professional, delayed the implementation of this decision as much as possible, which allowed the Stavka headquarters to take all possible part in planning and directing operations against the German troops, who launched an offensive on February 18, 1918. However, in addition time, the possibilities of the Headquarters were limited by the reorganization and reduction that had begun. This, of course, affected the planning of operations, as it prevented us from fully taking into account the situation in various strategic directions.

In addition, the Revolutionary Field Headquarters for Combating the Counter-Revolution at Headquarters, the Committee of Revolutionary Defense of Petrograd, the Emergency Headquarters of the Petrograd Military District, the headquarters of the fronts, and others dealt with issues related to repelling the offensive of the troops of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Each of them acted independently of the others, which led to confusion, the issuance of sometimes mutually exclusive directives and orders, disruption of interaction between fronts and armies. The problem of how to get out of this situation required an immediate solution.

On March 3, 1918, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR adopted a resolution on the creation of the Supreme Military Council (VVS) to direct military operations." It included the military leader, General M. D. Bonch-Bruевич, political commissars, the Left Social Revolutionary P. P. Proshyan (O. P. Ter-Arakelyan) and the Bolshevik K. I. Shutko. After the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, Supreme Commander Krylenko, People's Commissar for Naval Affairs Dybenko, and member of the Air Force Proshyan resigned in protest. In this regard, on March 13, 1918, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR decided to appoint Trotsky as People's Commissar for Military Affairs, and on March 18 approved a new

the composition of the Supreme Military Council: Chairman L. D. Trotsky (since April 6, he is also People's Commissar for Naval Affairs), member of the Council N. I. Podvoisky, their deputies K. A. Mekhonoshin and E. M. Sklyansky²⁰. The next day, the Council of People's Commissars adopted a new resolution, which noted that "the Supreme Military Council is placed at the head of defense." "It was entrusted with the development of the main tasks for the defense of the state and the organization of the Armed Forces of the country, the unification of the activities of the army and navy, monitoring fulfillment by the military and naval departments of the tasks entrusted to them. In addition to the persons listed above, the Supreme Military Council included members of the Board of the People's Commissariat of War and two specialists in naval affairs.

The Supreme Military Council was a collegiate body. Initially, there was no headquarters under him, and therefore all operational issues were under the jurisdiction of the quartermaster general and several of his assistants for the operational part. On May 14, 1918, the operational and organizational departments were created, and on June 20, the headquarters of the Supreme Military Council.

At the same time, work continued to streamline the structure of other bodies of higher military command. On May 8, 1918, the People's Commissariat of War issued an order to create the All-Russian General Staff (Vseroglavshstab) instead of the previously existing All-Russian Collegium for the formation of the Red Army, the Main Directorate of the General Staff, the General Staff, the Main Commissariat of Military Educational Institutions and the Directorate for Repair (purchase and distribution of equestrian staff) armies²¹. It became the supreme body in charge of accounting and mobilization of those liable for military service, formation, organization and training of troops. He was also entrusted with the development of states, charters, instructions, instructions and regulations for the troops; the internal military districts and all local military bodies were subordinate to him. The Vseroglavshstab was headed by a Council consisting of two military commissars and a chief of staff. On May 2, by decision of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs, the operational department of the Moscow District Commissariat for Military Affairs was transferred to the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs. He became on

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be called the operational department of the People's Commissariat of War²². At the same time, the Main Directorate of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Military Air Fleet (Glavvozdukhoflot) was formed on the basis of the All-Russian Collegium for Air Fleet Management.

After the reorganization, operational issues were dealt with by the Air Force headquarters, the operational departments of the People's Commissariat of War and the All-Glavshstab. Since there was no close contact between them, they most often duplicated each other, which affected the effectiveness of command and control. This did not go unnoticed by a number of senior officials. So, A. I. Egorov, chairman of the Higher Attestation Commission, and in the recent past, a colonel, sent a special report to Lenin on August 20, 1918, where he expressed his concern about what was happening: "Overview of all operations conducted on various fronts", indicates that they do not have a definite single thought and will. Yegorov supported his conclusion with the message that the highest military bodies had no plans for war, new formations and operations on the fronts. In order to "unify the military mind that directs all operations on all fronts," he proposed appointing a Supreme Commander responsible to the Soviet People's Commissar, and under him to form an appropriate headquarters.

Egorov's project was approved by the leaders of the People's Commissariat of War. On September 2, 1918, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee adopted a resolution on the transformation of the Soviet Republic into a military camp and the formation of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (RVSR) with one Commander-in-Chief, and on September 30 approved the regulation on the RVSR²³. In accordance with this provision, the RVSR was transformed into the body of the highest military power in the country, to which all the rights of the Board of the People's Commissariat of War and the abolished Supreme Military Council were transferred. The activities of the RVSR were directed and controlled by the Central Committee of the RCP(b). The establishment of the foundations for the organization of the Armed Forces of the RSFSR according to the Constitution belonged to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, and the overall control of the Armed Forces belonged to the Council of People's Commissars.

In the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, under the chairmanship of Trotsky, the operational and administrative functions of managing the Armed Forces were concentrated. However, his competence did not include the issues of transport, the military industry, and the supply of food to the troops. The orders of the RVSR were not binding on the Supreme Council of the National Economy, the People's Commissariat for Food, other people's commissariats and departments, despite the fact that, according to the regulation of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of September 30, all Soviet institutions were obliged, first of all, to consider and satisfy the requirements of the RVSR. In order to ensure the centralization of the leadership of the Armed Forces, a Bureau was created as part of the Revolutionary Military Council, which included the chairman of the RVSR, the Commander-in-Chief and one member of the RVSR.

The composition of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, in addition to political commissars, included the Commander-in-Chief of all the Armed Forces of the Republic. The statute on the Commander-in-Chief was announced by a resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR of December 5, 1918. The resolution stated that the Commander-in-Chief "is the combat commander of all the land and naval armed forces of the Republic that are part of the army in the field"²⁴. All other units and fortresses were subordinate to him operationally. The commander-in-chief received directives from the Central Committee of the RCP(b), the Council of People's Commissars or the Defense Council through the chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic and enjoyed complete independence in all matters of an operational-strategic nature. However, the experience of the war showed that the Commander-in-Chief (initially former Colonel Vatsetis, and from July 1919 - Colonel Kamenev) received directives and instructions not only through the chairman of the RVSR, but in some cases directly from the Central Committee of the party and Lenin as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and the Council defense. As a result, the efficiency in the work of the Chief Command increased.

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of the Red Army, since timely measures were taken to improve the leadership of the fronts and individual armies.

Developed provisions on the Revolutionary Military Council and the Commander-in-Chief of all the Armed Forces of the Republic

determined the principles of troop command and control under conditions when the highest command positions were occupied by non-partisan military specialists. The full military power belonged to the collective body - the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, and without the signature of one of its members, the directives and orders of the Commander-in-Chief were considered invalid. The most important decisions of the RVSR and the High Command took effect only after their approval by the Central Committee of the Party. From now on, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic was subordinated to the All-Russian General Headquarters, the Field Headquarters of the RVSR, the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, the Central (since 1919 - Main) Supply Department, the Military Legislative Council, the Higher Military Inspectorate and other central bodies of military administration "**.

The operational working body of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic and the Commander-in-Chief was the Headquarters of the RVSR, renamed on October 2 into the Field Headquarters of the RVSR (heads: Captain P. M. Maigur, Generals N. I. Rattel, F. V. Kostyaev, M. D. Bonch-Bruевич, P. P. Lebedev). The Chief of the Field Staff was the only person who reported to the RVSR and the Commander-in-Chief on all matters of operational management and the state of the army. The Assistant Chief of the Field Staff dealt with the issues of logistical support and inspection of troops, which enabled the Chief of the Field Staff to focus on purely operational-strategic issues and direct the activities of his subordinate agencies**.

The main functional duties of the Field Headquarters were: planning and providing leadership for strategic operations; development of directives and operational tasks for the fronts, periodic reports on the strategic situation on the fronts; assessment of enemy forces and means; training of all types of troops and services and their inspection; organization and implementation of strategic regroupings of troops; military-historical description of battles and operations; correspondence with the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on diplomatic issues requiring a special opinion from a military point of view, etc.*°

Since September 1919, the leadership of the Air Force was replaced by the Glavvozdukhoflot by the Field Directorate of Aviation and Aeronautics of the Army in the Field (AVIADARM). Back in June 1918, the Main Military Engineering Directorate (GVIU) was created, on August 30 - the Central Armor Directorate (subordinated to the GVIU), which was transformed on January 31, 1919 into the Main Armor Directorate. In October 1918, the post of commander of the naval forces of the Republic (Comorsi) was introduced. True, already in December, the Board of the People's Commissariat for Maritime Affairs was abolished and the Naval Department of the RVSR was created, and Comorsi was included in the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic. In the second half of the same year, the system of the party political apparatus was also reorganized. On October 2, the political department of the People's Commissariat of War was renamed the political department of the RVSR, and on October 9, the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars was subordinated to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic. On November 13, the political department of the RVSR was merged with the All-Bureau Military Commissariat, which became the single central political body of the Armed Forces of the Republic.

In 1919-1920. The improvement of strategic leadership bodies was carried out on the basis of decisions of the US Congress of the RCP (b), held in March 1919. The Congress demanded that the Field Headquarters of the RVSR be reorganized, the work of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic and the All-Russian General Headquarters be regulated. In accordance with the decision of the congress, the staff of the RVSR was reduced to 6 people, which made it possible to increase the efficiency in its work. The Registration (Intelligence) Directorate and the Central Directorate of Military Communications (TsUPVOSO) were now subordinate to

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directly to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic. In September, the Higher Military Inspectorate was disbanded and replaced by military and naval inspectorates under the RVSR. At the Field Headquarters, the secretariat of the RVSR and the inspection of the cavalry were established in April, in October - the Communications Department of the Red Army, on March 17, 1920 - the inspection of armored units. On March 25, 1920, the Field Directorate of Aviation and Aeronautics was transformed into the Headquarters of the Air Fleet, naval aviation was merged with land aviation, and the Directorate of Supply of the Air Fleet was created. In June 1919, the Naval Department of the RVSR was liquidated and the People's Commissariat for Maritime Affairs was recreated. On the basis of the Naval General Staff, on July 3, the Headquarters of the Commander of the Naval Forces of the Republic was formed, renamed on July 3, 1920 into the Headquarters of All Naval Forces of the RSFSR.

The structure of the party-political apparatus of the army and navy also underwent a significant change. On April 18, 1919, the All-Bureau Military Committee was abolished and the Political Department was re-established, which on May 26 was transformed into the Political Directorate of the RVSR with the rights of the military department of the Central Committee of the RCP (b). The Political Directorate was entrusted with the conduct of all party, political, cultural and educational work in the army and navy.

No less difficult was the process of developing the rear services of the Armed Forces. Since November 1917, logistic support issues were resolved by the supply department of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee, the Main Headquarters of the Red Guard of Petrograd and the central headquarters of the Red Guard of other cities of the country, the interfront commission for the supply of military organizations (frontkomsnab), and since January 1918 - the All-Russian Collegium for Fort - Peace of the Red Army. However, such numerous supply agencies, completely unrelated to each other, were not able to ensure uninterrupted material and technical supply of the troops and forces of the fleet. In order to eliminate these shortcomings || June 1918, the Central Directorate of Supply (CUS) of the Red Army was established, which contributed to some improvement in logistics, rational and planned distribution of material resources. But the Central Supply Department was engaged only in distribution, and therefore had no opportunity to influence the work of the military industry. Such a body was the Extraordinary Commission for the Production of Military Equipment under the Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh), established on August 16, 1918.

With the formation in September 1918 of operational and operational-strategic formations, the corresponding rear departments began to be created - the main chiefs of supplies for the fronts and armies. On November 2, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR adopted a resolution on the transformation of the Extraordinary Commission for the production of items of military equipment into the Extraordinary Commission for the Supply of the Red Army (Chrezkomsnab).

the control over the activities of artillery, military engineering and naval factories, the mobilization of military industry enterprises for the needs of the army, the regulation and control of foreign orders for items of military equipment were assigned.

In 1919, in accordance with the decisions of the July plenum of the Central Committee of the RCP(b), the creation of a centralized system of rear services for the Armed Forces was completed. On July 9, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee adopted a decree on the establishment of the position of the Extraordinary Commissioner of the Defense Council for the supply of the Red Army and Red Navy (Chusosnabarm) ?? A. I. Rykov, who headed it, was responsible for supplying the army and navy with all types of allowances (except for food), for raising labor productivity at factories working for defense, and for distributing supplies at the front and in the rear. The Extraordinary Commission for the Supply of the Red Army was abolished. On August 16, on the basis of the apparatus of the abolished Central Commission for Supplying the Army with Food, in accordance with the decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Main Directorate for Supplying the Red Army and Navy (Glavsna**bro**darm) was created. It is like an organ

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The food commissioner led the special food commissions (oprodk) of the fronts, armies, divisions and brigades.

In the Navy, the Main Directorate of Shipbuilding was in charge of technical support, and the Main Marine Economic Directorate was in charge of other types of materiel. In aviation, logistics issues were first decided by the All-Russian Collegium for Air Fleet Management, from May 1918 - by the Main Directorate of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Air Fleet, and from March 1920 - by the Supply Department of the RKKVF.

An important step towards improving the structure of strategic leadership was the creation of front-line and army formations. In accordance with the order of the People's Commissar of War dated May 3, 1918, the Czechoslovak Front was formed, and on June 14, the North Ural-Siberian Front. At the same time, all individual detachments, units and formations are brought together in an army. Soon the troops of the Czechoslovak and North Ural-Siberian fronts were united and subordinated to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Eastern Front. However, it received its official status only || September 1918, when the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic issued an order on the formation of the Northern, Eastern and Southern fronts*. On December 5, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR approved the regulations on the commander of the armies of the front and the commander of the army that is part of the front. According to these provisions, the fronts and armies were now led by revolutionary military councils, which were not only bodies of military control, but also political leadership of the troops. In accordance with these documents, the Field Headquarters of the RVSR developed the "Regulations on the field command and control of troops in wartime", approved on December 26, 1918 by the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic®.

With the formation of strategic formations, the leadership of the armed struggle began to be carried out at the link of the Commander-in-Chief —the front or a separate army. It proved its efficiency and vitality throughout the war. In some cases, an intermediate body of strategic leadership was also created in a separate strategic direction, for example, an assistant to the Commander-in-Chief for Siberia. This body was established on April 24, 1920 by the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, and on September 26 the regulation on it was approved.” The appointment of the assistant to the Commander-in-Chief for Siberia was due to the need to bring the leadership closer to the troops and partisan rebel formations in Siberia, to increase the stability and efficiency of their management, to coordinate the activities of all departments, institutions, institutions and military units of Siberia. The Assistant to the Commander-in-Chief reported directly to the RVSR, and operationally - to the Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces of the Republic. Assistant to the Commander-in-Chief for Siberia controlled the troops of the East Siberian Military District, the 5th separate army and fortified areas in Siberia *

In the course of the civil war, the system of organs for directing the armed struggle in the camp of opponents of Soviet Russia also developed. Basically, it was based on the experience of the First World War, but

changed taking into account the peculiarities of the civil war.

The development of the problems of the strategy directed by the Entente countries to achieve their military-political goals, and the leadership of the armed struggle against the Soviet Republic were carried out by various bodies. The most important questions concerning military intervention in Russia were decided at conferences of heads of government of the Entente countries with the participation of foreign ministers. Thus, on March 15, 1918, the prime ministers and foreign ministers of Great Britain, France and Italy met in London, where the final decision was made on armed intervention in Siberia and the North of Soviet Russia.

In the system of strategic leadership, a large place was occupied by correspondence between heads of government, ministers of foreign affairs, including with leaders

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white movement by Admiral Kolchak, Generals Denikin, Wrangel and others, in order to coordinate efforts in various theaters of military operations. For example, on March 16, 1918, British Foreign Secretary A. Balfour informed the US government of the decision of the conference of heads of governments of Great Britain, France and Italy on the possibility of using Japan for intervention in Siberia.

The most important issues of the conduct of hostilities in Russia were resolved at bilateral meetings of the heads of government or ministers of foreign affairs, or ministers of war and the Supreme Commander of the Allied Armies in Europe, Marshal F. Foch. So, at the beginning of March 1919, the British Minister of War, W. Churchill, specially met in Paris with the marshal to discuss the situation of the Allied forces on the Black Sea coast!

Such forms of communication were widely used as consultations and correspondence between the ambassadors of the Entente countries in Russia with their ministries of foreign affairs (US Department of State) or military ministers with representatives of military missions in the White Guard armies and with the commanders-in-chief (commanders) of the allied forces in Russia. For example, on February 21, 1918, the American ambassador to Russia, D. Francis, sent a telegram to the US Secretary of State R. Lansing with a proposal to occupy Vladivostok, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, and on April 4, a member of the French military mission in Russia, Major J. Pichon, submitted to his government a report "On plans for intervention in Siberia.

Similar issues were repeatedly discussed at the meetings of the Paris Peace Conference, which worked (with interruptions) from January 16, 1919 to January 21, 1920, with the aim of developing and signing peace treaties with the countries of the Quadruple Alliance. The supreme body of the Paris Peace Conference was the Supreme Council, and its composition changed several times. In the beginning it was the Council of Ten: the heads of government and foreign ministers of the USA, Great Britain, France, Italy and two special representatives from Japan. From March 1919, instead of the Council of Ten, the Council of Four (representatives of Great Britain, France, the USA and Italy) was created, and at the end of July, the Council of Five (or the Council of Heads of Delegations). In addition to the members of the Council of Four, it included another representative from Japan. The meetings of the Supreme Council discussed such issues as the condition of the allied troops and the military situation in Russia, the creation of a commission to coordinate plans for intervention, the use of the forces of the states of Eastern Europe against Soviet Russia, etc.¹⁶

The Supreme Military Council, established in November 1917, was to become the main body specifically dealing with the conduct of the war in Russia¹⁷. It consisted of a chairman and one military representative "from each allied government", under which a permanent apparatus (headquarters) operated. However, due to constant disagreements between the allies, the desire of the commanders-in-chief of the allied armies for autonomy, the Supreme Military Council from the very beginning turned out to be incapable of implementing a unified

command.

The Inter-Allied (Executive) Committee formed on February 2, 1918, consisting of four permanent military representatives, chaired by Marshal Foch, became the executive body of the Supreme Military Council! The Inter-Allied Committee at its meetings considered various issues: the transfer of American troops to the North of Russia (June 1918); on the preparation of the armies of Poland, Romania, the Baltic countries and the White Guard troops for joint actions against the Soviet Republic (January 1920); on the supply of weapons and ammunition to the White Guards in Poland (January, July 1920), etc.¹⁸. Sometimes these issues, even before they were submitted for discussion by the Inter-Allied Committee of Military Representatives, were considered by the chairman of the Supreme Military Council together with the defense ministers of the Entente countries. In some cases, the decisions of the committee were directed by the

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the leaders of the Entente states, the leaders of the white regimes or the heads of military missions under them.

In April 1918, the direct leadership of the armed struggle in Russia was entrusted to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Armies in France, Marshal Foch¹⁹. The issues of planning operations against the Red Army were now decided by the General Staff of the High Command of the Allied Armies, created back in the years of the First World War. Its functions included determining the goals of the intervention, clarifying the responsibilities of each country in fulfilling the general plan and tasks of the allied armies. He also decided where to land the troops of the Entente on the territory of Russia, as well as how many forces and means needed to complete tasks in various theaters of military operations. His competence included the selection of candidates for the posts of commanders-in-chief (commanders) of the allied forces in Russia and the coordination of their actions with the White Guard armies, etc.²⁰

An important place in the activities of the strategic leadership of the Entente troops was given to the creation of bodies for command and control of troops directly in the theaters of military operations. In the North of Russia, the allied and White Guard units and formations were headed by the British General F. Poole, and from September 1919 - his

comparative General W. B. Fomale. The allied forces in Eastern Russia and Siberia were commanded by the French general M. Janin. Japanese General Otani was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in the Far East, the English General L. Densterville in Transcaucasia, and the English General W. Malleson in Turkestan.

In other words, the leadership of the armed struggle against Soviet Russia was carried out through a rather complex system: the Council of Ten (Council of Four, later the Council of Five) - the Supreme Military Council - the Inter-Union Committee of Military Representatives - the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces - the General Staff of the Supreme Commander - the headquarters of the commanders in chief (commanders) of the Allied and White Guard troops in the theaters of operations. Despite this seemingly orderly system, it began to falter from the very beginning, because it was unable to unite the efforts of all the opponents of Soviet Russia. The main reason for this was the irreconcilable contradictions between the powers of the Entente in questions about the future state structure of Russia and about the spheres of their influence on it.

territory.

The leaders of the white regimes created their own bodies of leadership of the armed struggle, which, in fact, acted independently of each other.

From November 1918, Admiral Kolchak was formally considered the Supreme Ruler of the Russian state and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all the land and sea forces of Russia. In January 1919, he concluded an agreement with representatives of the Entente on the coordination of plans and actions with the interventionists, as well as his own plans of operations with the directives of the Supreme High Command of the Allied Forces. The link was to be the commander of the allied forces in Eastern Russia and Siberia, General Zhanen. In turn, he received the right to exercise general control at the front and in the rear, to have his own officers in the White Guard headquarters, institutions and units, to approve plans of operations common to the White Guards and Allied troops. Under General Zhanen, there was a headquarters that, in solving general operational issues, closely cooperated with the headquarters of Admiral Kolchak and at the same time directly led the troops of the interventionists. Admiral Kolchak's chief adviser on the rear, organizing the army and supplying the front with all the necessary means was the head of the British military mission in Siberia, General A. Knox.

Admiral Kolchak, as the Supreme Commander, concentrated in his hands all the fullness of political, administrative and military power. Him directly

Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all Land and Naval Armed Forces of Russia and 9

Advice

Allied ministers

MISSIONS

Headquarters of the Supreme Command General Headquarters of the Civil Code of the Armed Forces of the YuR Navy

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Special Headquarters Allied Mission Meeting

Army Army

Siberia-West- | | Dobrovol- Donskaya Caucasian Separate Black Sea (Kubanskaya) | | Turkestan| | Russian fleet

Supreme Soviet of the Entente

Supreme Military Council Inter-Allied Supreme Command Allied Armies Executive Committee in Europe

Allied General Staff

our armies in Europe

Civil Code of Allied Forces in Turkestan

Civil Code of the Allied Forces in Transcaucasia

Civil Code of Allied Forces in the Far East

Civil Code of Allied Forces in the North of Russia

Diagram 23

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subordinate to the headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief (chief of staff - General D. A. Lebedev), who decided all issues on the preparation and use of Kolchak's armies, planning operations and daily management of military operations! Troops were controlled through the commanders of armies, groups of troops and their

At the headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief there were departments of counterintelligence and military control, which dealt with the organization of intelligence and counterintelligence services, as well as the fight against partisans. In July 1919, Admiral Kolchak abolished the cumbersome Headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, and entrusted the management of armies (corps) to the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Front, General M.K. Diterikhs.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia, General Denikin, controlled the troops through the headquarters headed by General I.P. Romanovsky. In mid-November 1919, Denikin appointed two assistants to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief (one of them was also Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia)! Commanders of armies, separate groups of troops and commanders of separate corps were subordinate to General Denikin. They had corresponding headquarters, which included departments (operational, general on duty, sanitary), departments (quartermaster general, head of supplies, quartermaster, artillery inspector, head of military communications, etc.) and various departments!!

At the end of May 1919, under pressure from the Allies, General Denikin was forced to recognize Admiral Kolchak as the Supreme Ruler and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all the land and sea armed forces of Russia, in fact, the general still decided all issues of strategic leadership on his own.

And with Admiral Kolchak, to a certain extent, the Commander-in-Chief of the troops of the Northern Front, General Miller, and the Commander-in-Chief of the North-Western Front, General Yudenich, appointed by him, interacted to a certain extent. But due to the significant remoteness of these fronts from the Headquarters of Admiral Kolchak in Omsk, both commanders-in-chief often acted completely independently.

The commander-in-chief of the Russian army, General Wrangel, directed the actions of his troops through the headquarters (chief of staff - General P.N. Shatilov), corps commanders (since October 1920 - army commanders) and their headquarters. A group of special forces, artillery and tank battalions, spare parts, and a flotilla were directly subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief!

In general, the structure of the strategic leadership of the White Guard armed forces was in many respects similar to the system that had developed during the First World War, and was built mainly in accordance with the Regulations on the field command and control of troops, developed in 1914. However, each White Guard grouping, depending on the composition, opportunities and tasks to be solved had its own specific features. There was no unified command of all the White Guard formations, although there was a Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all the land and sea armed forces of Russia. But this title was only formal, since each commander-in-chief acted at his own discretion under the influence of representatives of those Entente countries that had the greatest influence in a particular region of Russia.

The leadership of the armed struggle in the states that seceded from Russia was carried out approximately according to the same scheme. Thus, the armies of Ukraine, the Baltic and Transcaucasian republics had their own commanders-in-chief and headquarters. In the armed forces of Poland, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief exercised command over military operations through the General Staff and front commanders. The composition of the field

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the departments of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief included: adjutantura; general inspectors of military branches, sanitary and technical services; General base; heads of communications, aviation, military communications and other institutions! 3.

The bodies of strategic leadership of the opposing sides paid considerable attention to issues related to the development of military strategy and the preparation and conduct of strategic operations.

4. Development of military strategy in the civil war

For a long time there was a version about the special nature of the Soviet military strategy. It was believed that it arose after October 1917 on a fundamentally different political and social basis, that is, it was fundamentally different from the bourgeois military strategy that underlay the actions of the anti-Bolshevik forces. This version was theoretically substantiated by the proposition put forward by Engels and developed by Lenin that the victorious proletariat would create its own special proletarian method of waging war. However, the civil war and subsequent wars of the twentieth century did not confirm this conclusion. Historical practice has shown that both capitalist and socialist states use basically identical means and methods of conducting armed struggle in war.

Therefore, it can be assumed that during the period of the civil war in Russia: the struggle was between two branches of the same national Russian military strategy, pursuing different political goals. The latter circumstance gives grounds to speak of both the Soviet military strategy and the military strategy of the white movement, although both sides used the same means of struggle, and were based on common national traditions, followed from the same scientific school, and were carried out in accordance with the same type of fundamental principles. installations were put into practice by military personnel who grew up on the same national soil.

From this, of course, it does not at all follow that the strategy of the Bolsheviks and the strategy of the White movement are absolutely identical, that the one and the other side had no difference in the theory, the nature of strategic plans and actions. One way or another, but the fundamental differences in politics could not but affect both the strategy of conducting large-scale operations of Soviet Russia, and the strategy of Russia, controlled by the white movement. The Red and White armies had directly opposite military-political goals and strategic tasks. The general orientation of the strategy of the Bolsheviks and the anti-Bolshevik forces on various

stages of the war. The specific operations carried out by the armed forces of the opposing sides also had many characteristic features. Throughout the war, the strategy of the Red Army, based on the consistent defeat of the enemy, all-round defense and eccentric offensive, opposed the strategy of the White armies and other anti-Bolshevik forces, which was based mainly on concentric actions, holding the occupied areas and delivering successive blows on one, then in the other direction. And in this regard, it is legitimate to talk about the Soviet and the white military strategy.

During the war years, the military strategy of the Red Army went through a number of stages, at each of which a certain strategic war plan was implemented, both practice and theory of strategy developed. First of all, former officers and generals of the Russian army, who held responsible positions in the system of strategic leadership, actively participated in the formation of strategic views that took into account the special conditions of the war. However, certain

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Some political and military figures of the Soviet state also contributed, including Trotsky, Frunze, and others.

An important contribution to the development of the strategy was made by the staff of the RVSR Field Headquarters, who were engaged in summarizing the experience of strategic operations and bringing it to the highest command staff. The Operational Directorate of the Field Headquarters prepared the "Strategic Outline of the Red Army's Combat Operations", "A Brief Outline of the Red Army's Combat Operations", "The Strategic Review of the Eastern Front Area", the military-geographical essay "The Influence of the Climatic Conditions of the Volga-Kama System on the Eastern Front's Spring Operation" and etc.' Works were published developed by staff members of the headquarters of operational formations, well-known military leaders and teachers of the Academy of the General Staff'. The problems of strategy were discussed on the pages of the central military-theoretical journal Voennoye delo. A great deal of work was done by the Commission for the Study and Use of the Experience of the First World War!7. Of course, theoretical activity in the field of strategy during the war was severely limited. The new was born mainly in the actual practice of the strategic actions of the armed forces.

At the initial stage of the civil war (October 1917 - February 1918), the main danger to the newly created Soviet state was represented by anti-Bolshevik forces that had established themselves in the Don, Kuban, Ukraine, Transcaucasia and the Caspian region. Under those conditions, the strategic plan of the Red Army command was to defeat the enemy, and before he had time to consolidate his forces to deliver the main blow. First of all, it was supposed to destroy the troops of General A. M. Kaledin on the Don, then, without delay, to defeat the troops of the Central Rada in Ukraine and the Orenburg Cossack formations of Colonel A. I. Dutov. During the implementation of this plan, military operations were carried out mainly along the railway lines in order to capture large cities and communication centers, where the main stocks of weapons and food were concentrated. In particular, the defeat of the Don anti-Bolshevik forces was carried out by means of a concentric offensive of five consolidated columns advancing simultaneously in five directions, mainly along the railways. This method of action went down in history under the concept of "echelon warfare".

At the next stage, when repulsing the invasion of German troops (February-May 1918) and in the situation that developed after the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Peace, the main essence of the Bolshevik strategy was to "... give way to the actual winner in order to gain time"!8. Back at the end of December 1917, Krylenko, who had just been appointed Supreme Commander-in-Chief, noted that the army in the field "will hardly be able to withstand a serious onslaught of the enemy in the near future; !'. To this end, Krylenko outlined the final frontier where the armies were to gain a foothold. It passed along the line Revel-Weissenstein-Yuriev-Izborsk-Ostrov-Drissa-Borisov-Bobruisk-Mozyr-Ovruch-Zhytomyr-Mogilev on the Dniester-Yampol-Orgeev-Bendery-Akkerman. In the same place, instead of the previous system of a continuous cordon line, it was supposed to create a system of "strong and cohesive groups at strategically important points"! 2 °.

However, this plan could not be put into practice due to the spontaneous demobilization of the Russian army. The situation was aggravated by the fact that on February 18, 1918, the German troops went on the offensive. Three days later, the headquarters of the Supreme High Command decided on a deliberate withdrawal and organization of defense on the outskirts of Narva, Pskov, Ostrov, Nevel, Vitebsk, Orsha,

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Scheme 24. The beginning of the civil war and military intervention in Russia. October 1917 - May 1918

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Mogilev, Zhlobin, Mozyr, Berdichev, Vapnyarka and Odessa. The commanders of the Northern and Western fronts, as well as the councils of cities in the front line, were entrusted with the task of gathering all the retreating subunits and units, and then using them to defend the most important points, approaches to large cities and railway junctions. But even this plan was not fully realized. Nevertheless, subsequently, it was on its basis that a system of covering the borders was created, and then active fronts were deployed.

At the third stage, when the Soviet Republic found itself in the ring of fronts (May 1918 - March 1919), the main goal of the military strategy of the Bolsheviks was to hold the most important regions of the country, expand the territory controlled by them, frustrate the attempts of the Entente powers to create a united anti-Bolshevik front, and in the end, in defeating the troops of the interventionists and the Whites separately. From the summer to the autumn of 1918, the main efforts of the Bolsheviks were concentrated in the east of the country in order to suppress the Czechoslovak uprising and defeat individual White Guard formations, and from the end of the year they were transferred to the south - against Krasnov's army, the troops of the interventionists and the anti-Bolshevik forces supporting them. Initially, defense was combined with strikes in separate directions, and from the end of 1918 the Red Army went over to the offensive on all fronts.

At the fourth stage (March 1919 - March 1920) decisive battles unfolded. Waging a struggle against the armed forces of the White movement, the Bolsheviks built their strategic plan on the consistent defeat of the armies of Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich by repelling their blows and going over to a decisive counteroffensive. At the same time, from the spring to the middle of 1919, the Eastern Front was the main one, where the most important strategic task was solved - repelling the offensive of Kolchak's army and defeating it.

Since the autumn of 1919, when General Denikin launched a decisive offensive against Moscow, the main efforts were shifted to the south. Here, with the help of forces transferred from other directions and reserves, several major operations were prepared and carried out, as a result of which the enemy was stopped, bled white, and then defeated by decisive counterattacks, followed by a counteroffensive and a general offensive. At the same time, at the same stage, part of the forces solved private strategic tasks to complete the defeat of Kolchak's troops, the defense of Petrograd, and the defeat of the army of General Yudenich.

At the fifth stage (April-November 1920), the strategic plan of the Bolsheviks was also based on

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successive defeat, and, at first, the Polish armies, and then the Russian army of General Wrangel. As in previous cases, the Bolsheviks based their calculation on the contradictions between the various enemy groupings, defeating them in parts with a quick transfer of forces from one direction to another.

Subsequently (November 1920-1922), the Red Army faced private military-political and strategic tasks related to the liquidation of the remaining centers of resistance of the anti-Bolshevik forces, mainly in Transcaucasia, Central Asia and the Far East. At the same time, numerous peasant uprisings that flared up in one area or another were ruthlessly suppressed.

During the war years, the successes of the Red Army constantly alternated with serious setbacks. And the reason is that the political and military leadership of the RSFSR made major mistakes more than once. The armed forces, despite the fact that in a number of cases they had a numerical superiority, were repeatedly defeated and suffered huge losses in the process. The Perm catastrophe, which the 2nd and 3rd armies of the Eastern Front had to endure in December, had especially severe consequences.

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Scheme 25. The fight against the interventionists and the Whites. May 1918 - March 1919

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1918, the collapse of the Caspian-Caucasian Front in January 1919, the loss of Donbass by the troops of the Southern Front in the summer of 1919, the defeat of the Western Front in the area of the river. Vistula in 1920. Nevertheless, the final victory was on the side of the Red Army, which, in the course of a five-year stubborn struggle, defeated its opponents. The decisive role in this was played, on the one hand, by the disunity of the opponents, and on the other hand, by the advantages arising from the central position of the areas where the Bolsheviks had established themselves (superiority in human and material resources), their political propaganda among the population and army personnel. , as well as the administrative-state system created by the Bolsheviks, the firmness and determination of the leadership, and often more skillful conduct of the armed struggle.

During the course of the war, the Red Army successfully applied all forms and types of strategic actions, the most varied methods of solving strategic tasks. At the same time, as a rule, the specific conditions of the situation were strictly taken into account, the balance of forces and means of the parties was comprehensively assessed and compared, political and economic factors, the immediate and long-term consequences of the actions taken were taken into account. In this respect, the following example is quite typical. On April 21, 1919, Commander-in-Chief Vatsetis asked Lenin how politically admissible was the advance of the Red Army into Galicia and Bukovina, and what task could be assigned to the troops in this case. Lenin answered this: "Advancement to a part of Galicia and Bukovina is necessary for communication with Soviet Hungary. This task must be solved faster and more firmly, and outside of this task, no occupation of Galicia and Bukovina is necessary, because the Ukrainian army must certainly and in no case be distracted from its main tasks, namely: the first most important and urgent one is to help the Donbass. This assistance must be obtained quickly and on a large scale. The second task is to establish a strong connection by railroads with Soviet Hungary!?'.

It should be noted that political and economic considerations played a decisive role in the preparation and conduct of many other operations: in the fight against the troops of Admiral Kolchak and General Denikin, repelling the offensive of the Estonian, Finnish and Polish armies.

On the whole, when planning and organizing military operations, the Soviet command showed sufficient prudence, flexibility and far-sighted calculation, although sometimes it could not do without attempts to set clearly unrealistic tasks for the troops. But basically, forces and means were distributed expediently, the directions and time of delivering strikes against the enemy were chosen correctly, and most importantly, there was a constant desire to impose one's will on him.

The main type of strategic actions of the Red Army was the strategic offensive. After all, out of 31

month of the war (from May 1918 to November 1920), the Red troops conducted offensive operations for 25 months, and this is about 80% of the total duration of the armed struggle. Such a character of actions was conditioned by the decisive goals that were set for the troops, and therefore fully corresponded to the maneuverable nature of the civil war.

Already in the first years of its existence, the Red Army acquired some experience in offensive operations, which made it possible to develop the basic principles of active warfare. So, in September 1918, a group of employees of the Operational Department of the People's Commissariat of War, headed by Captain G. I. Teodori, presented Trotsky with a report on the military-political situation that had developed on the fronts. The report noted that Russia's former allies had established three invasion groups (northern, eastern and southern) and that it was necessary to defeat them one by one, "using their central position and operating along internal lines of operations by conducting

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Scheme 26. The defeat of the main forces of the interventionists and the Whites. March 1919 - March 1920

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consecutive offensive operations. To this end, the report outlined the main operational areas on each front, and in order to
achieve success, the compilers of the report proposed the formation of powerful mobile forces (supertank divisions)!2?. Commander-
in-Chief Vatsetis pointed out the need for actions along internal operational lines in his report to the Revolutionary Military
Council of the Republic dated October 29, 1918. He wrote: "We will have to withdraw troops from the least dangerous front and
transfer them to the most threatened front, or to the front where we are going to strike the enemy"°.

The methods of conducting a strategic offensive were constantly improved and developed. Already in 1919, such an offensive was
a system of simultaneous and successive front-line and army offensive operations, and operations of army groups, carried out
according to a single plan of the Red Army High Command. Along with fronts, river and lake military flotillas, as well as partisan-
insurgent formations, took part in a number of strategic operations.

In the course of a strategic offensive, major tasks were usually solved: to defeat the main groupings of interventionist and
White Guard troops, to seize the strategic initiative, to seize strategically and politically-economically important areas, to defeat the main
enemy groupings in the most important theaters of military operations.

At various stages of the civil war, the number of fronts that simultaneously participated in the strategic offensive was different. Thus,
in the autumn of 1918 and in the winter of 1918/1919, and exactly one year later, offensive operations were carried out
simultaneously on five fronts, in the summer of 1920 on two, and in the autumn of the same year on only one front. In most cases, as
a result of the offensive, the military-political situation changed dramatically, and certain military-strategic goals of the WAR were achieved.

Significant forces participated in strategic offensive operations (the most important of them are presented in Table 1): from 15
to 44 divisions, from 67 to 150 thousand bayonets and sabers, from 260 to 900 guns, from 1,100 to 3,800 machine guns, etc. At the
same time (except for operations in the South at the end of 1919 and 1920), the troops of the Red Army most often did not have
superiority in forces and means over the enemy, or it was insignificant.

Under such conditions, decisive massing of troops, skillful selection of the directions of the main attacks and the creation of an
overwhelming advantage in forces and means over the enemy acquired exceptional importance. This was especially pointed out already
in his report by Theodori, who recommended "choosing the most important places of the enemy for the strike and, consequently, the
most dangerous for us"! 2*. Usually the direction of the main attack on one front or another was determined by the High Command of
the Red Army. Sometimes, which happened rarely, it was considered and approved either by the Central Committee of the
RCP (b), or by the Politburo and the RVSR. The main blow was delivered most often where it was possible to achieve the greatest
military-political results, and in the shortest possible time. At the same time, the complex took into account not only military, but also
political, economic and even geographical factors. For example, in the operation to defeat the Armed Forces of the South of Russia,
which was carried out by the combined efforts of the Southern and South-Eastern fronts, the main blow was delivered through
Kharkov and the Donets basin to Rostov, taking into account the fact that it was possible to cut through the main grouping enemy in
two. But not the last role was played by the fact that in this direction the population mainly sympathized with the Bolsheviks, and in
addition there was a developed railway network, coal,

food.

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Front line and Islam' April 24

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Directions of strikes of the military on the Western Front on May 14

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Front line May 15-25

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LANDSCAPE POLAND |

Directions of strikes of the South West | bottom front in the Lvov operation July 24 August 20 |

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th Nerzon Line eastern border Position of the Soviet troops on the way out —' -'-- Poland proposed by the Entente 8

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The front line is running out on June 5

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The position of the Wrangel military by the end of August 6

Directions of strikes of the Southwestern Front in August

Nakhovsni bridgehead. created by the Soviet troops on August 7-15

. Position of the troops of the Navnaz front

- Non-offensive of the troops of the Young FI -_ front in Northern Tavria on October 28, November

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Rumanian August 22 and the Direction Front strikes by the military Navy of Bessarabia captured of September 29, 1941 the Royal p p Number of fronts in August ^_^ (C captured by the bourgeois landowners E 3 n in Poland in 1920 Be = From the wound of the gift devours In the north, the numbers "marked and Gariania |: p # + E s 2 territory of Nlaipedsnom (Memelsnoi] , ^^ } ofef ka? at the end of October 1 3 Latvia 1500 000 Directions of strikes of the Southern Front 1: | b - frontal front in October 15 0 75 150 km | ___ - The position of the southern front nge E 5 " ie o ia ie b \ s Ko YA. b "9 hours yy" Valuyki 40 6 EE: Altyrka/Z > < \ \$ Re Pshemes! y ^^" E. 5 o - ogucha Novy Sonch (eremmsht) RA o "Sch x 5, ^. Banding - y -- { 7 \ r a - © lavyansk } ``", E | I kahmut; Lugansk _— and SShchebalievo o \u003d

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^ tank re -- 2 = ®. Perekop-Choiga saya Ir < Assault on the Chongar fortifications

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Mr. Ho Storming the Nerekonsky or Nikny fortifications on November 7, 1920

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Development of the Russian military strategy... 167

In the course of operations, efforts were concentrated, as a rule, against the most powerful and dangerous enemy grouping with the expectation of achieving
major political and strategic results in a short time, which could decisively influence the further course of the war.

Usually the main blow in a strategic offensive was carried out in a zone that made up 20-50% of the total width of the front offensive zone. At the same time, the
degree of massing of forces and means constantly increased. So, if in 1918 and early 1919 only about 20% of bayonets and sabers, 10% of machine guns and 15%
of guns were concentrated in the direction of the main attack, then in the future - already 45-70% of bayonets and sabers, 40-80% machine guns, 40-80% guns!?.

The High Command of the Red Army repeatedly demanded from the commanders of the fronts a more resolute massing of forces and means in the directions of the
main attacks. Thus, in the order of Commander-in-Chief Kamenev dated September 26, 1919, it was said that in the most important directions of the fronts, "the
appropriate forces must be grouped in a timely manner and with them they should deliver decisive blows to the enemy""°. However, in the context of a
general lack of forces, the fulfillment of such a requirement was fraught with great difficulties. Usually, the task was solved by creating and using strategic
reserves, and even by means of a wide maneuver of troops, the transfer of forces and means from auxiliary directions.

As a rule, the most combat-ready armies, corps and divisions, as well as armored forces and aircraft, were included in the strike groupings. Particular attention was paid
to the use of cavalry masses. Cavalry corps and armies were often used in the main theaters of military operations and in the most important areas. Thus, in the offensive
of the Southern and South-Eastern fronts against Denikin's troops in 1919-1920, as well as in the strategic offensive operation of the Western and South-
Western fronts against the Polish army in 1920, the | , and in the offensive of the Southern Front against the troops of General Wrangel in 1920 - the
1st and 2nd cavalry armies. Most often, they solved tasks related to the development of a tactical breakthrough into an operational one, the dismemberment and
encirclement of the main enemy groupings, and the rapid transfer of efforts from one direction to another. But sometimes they, according to the experience of
the 2nd Cavalry Army, acted in the first operational echelon.

The main goal of a strategic offensive was almost always the defeat of the enemy's armed forces, his manpower and equipment. At the same time, great
importance was also attached to the capture of politically and economically important regions and centers, without which the country could not live, and the army
could not fight. In this regard, the strategic offensive operation to defeat Kolchak's troops, during which the Red Army captured the Urals and Siberia, as well as
the operation to defeat Denikin's armies, when the most important goal was to capture the Donbass and other industrial centers of Ukraine, cities Rostov and
Novorossiysk.

The enormous length of the front line, reaching at various stages of the war from 2.5 thousand to 8 thousand km, created its own difficulties. However, the Red Army had to repeatedly shift its efforts from one theater of operations to another if the main threat arose there. And in each of the theaters it was impossible to count on achieving goals with one blow. This was due, on the one hand, to the fact that it was often necessary to limit offensive operations without completing the defeat of the enemy, because it was urgently necessary to transfer forces to another area. On the other hand, the enemy in many cases withdrew forces from the blow and restored the defeated groupings through regular mobilizations or other emergency measures, as well as thanks to the help of the allied powers.

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That is why, in almost all theaters of military operations, the Red Army was forced to carry out a series of successive strategic offensive operations. In turn, each strategic operation consisted of a series of successive front-line operations and operations of army groups, closely interconnected in concept. The successful completion of the first operation created the conditions for subsequent actions. And the results achieved in one strategic direction or theater of military operations made it possible to intensify actions in another direction or even another theater of military operations.

In the course of the strategic offensive, various types of military operations were organically combined with each other. Most often, the strategic offensive of the fronts began with a counteroffensive. In the event of its successful development, it developed into a general offensive, and the latter, if it did not end with the achievement of the ultimate goal in a given theater of operations, was often replaced by defense. However, defense had to be resorted to more than once between successive operations of fronts and armies.

The transition to a counteroffensive was usually carried out after a forced withdrawal of troops or after a more or less lengthy strategic defense at a certain line. Most often, it was undertaken when the enemy's strike groupings were losing their offensive impulse, his reserves were exhausted, and the troops were stretched out on a wide front, exposing their flanks. In other words, the moment was chosen when the enemy was in a critical situation, and the defending troops could at least partially restore their combat capability.

In a counteroffensive, the main object of action, as a rule, was an enemy grouping deeply wedged into the defense. A sudden blow was delivered most often to the flank or to the rear, but sometimes from the front, in order to dismember the advancing enemy troops, to crush them separately. Thus, during the counteroffensive of the Eastern Front against the troops of Admiral Kolchak, strikes from the front were skillfully combined with strikes on the flanks. The transition to the counteroffensive of the Southern Front in the autumn of 1919 was carried out by flank attacks in the area of Orel and Voronezh against the Volunteer Army, the main striking force of the Armed Forces of southern Russia, which then developed into a general cutting blow to Kharkov, Donbass, Rostov. In the counteroffensive of the Southern Front against the Russian Army in the autumn of 1920, several flank attacks were made in order to encircle the enemy in Northern Tavia.

As part of the counter-offensive and the subsequent general offensive, each front carried out, one after the other, two or more front-line offensive operations or operations of army groups. Thus, from April to June 1919, during the counteroffensive of the Eastern Front against the troops of Admiral Kolchak, three offensive operations (Buguruslan, Belebey and Ufa) were carried out by the forces of the Southern Army Group (1st, 4th, 5th and Turkestan), as well as one offensive operation by the Northern Army Group (2nd and 3rd) in the Izhevsk and Glazov directions. As a result, the main enemy grouping (Western Army of General M.V. Khanzhin) was defeated, and its remnants were thrown back to the foothills of the Urals. Then, in order to completely defeat the enemy and capture the Urals, the Eastern Front launched a general offensive, which lasted from the end of June 1919 to the beginning of January 1920. It included offensive operations of army groups - Perm, Yekaterinburg, Petropavlovsk, Omsk, and Novonikolaevsk, as well as army operations - Zlatoust, Chelyabinsk, Krasnoyarsk.

A further offensive in the Irkutsk direction was carried out by one 5th Separate Army. The total depth of the strategic offensive of the Red Army troops in the eastern theater of operations was 3.5 thousand km and ended with an exit to Lake Baikal.

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The counteroffensive of the Southern Front against the troops of General Denikin was carried out in the course of two operations of the Army Group: the Oryol-Kursk (13th and 14th armies, as well as the strike group), which lasted from October 11 to November 18 in the center of the front , and Voronezh-Kastornenskaya (part of the forces of the 13th Army, the 8th Army and the Cavalry Corps) from October 13 to November 16, 1919 on the left wing of the front. As a result, the Volunteer Army operating in the main Moscow direction was defeated. At the same time, favorable conditions were created for the transition to the general offensive of the troops of the Southern and Southeastern fronts. They conducted a number of successive operations of various scales: one front-line (Kharkov), two army group operations (Donbass and Rostov-Novocherkassk) and a number of army operations. As a result, the main grouping of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia was defeated, their remnants were thrown back to the North Caucasus. The total depth of advance (from Orel to Rostov) of the Red Army troops was almost 900 km.

From January 17 to April 7, 1920, the troops of the Caucasian Front carried out the North Caucasian strategic offensive operation. Its goal is to complete the defeat of the troops of General Denikin in the Don and the North Caucasus. In the Tikhoretsko-Ekaterinodar-Novorossiysk direction, it also consisted of a series of successive offensive operations of several armies, and in other directions - of separate army offensive operations carried out according to a single plan. The total depth of advance of the troops of the front in this operation was about 500 km. The operation ended with the complete defeat of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia and the evacuation of their remnants to the Crimea.

In 1920, the Red Army carried out two strategic offensive operations. The first - by the forces of the Western Front against the Polish army in the Minsk-Warsaw direction, the South-Western Front - in the Kiev-Lvov direction. The second - by the forces of the Southern Front against the Russian army of General Wrangel in Northern Tavria and the Crimea. In the first operation, the troops, advancing 300-600 km, reached the approaches to Warsaw, Lublin and Lvov, but were defeated as a result of a powerful counteroffensive of the Polish army in the area of the river. Vistula and were thrown back to Grodno and Brest-Litovsk. In the second operation, at its first stage, the main enemy forces in Northern Tavria were defeated, and at the second stage, in November 1920, the Crimea was completely occupied. The total depth of the advance of the troops was 180-350 km ..

The examples cited testify that in the strategic offensive the tasks were solved on larger fronts than in the First World War and to a greater depth. Moreover, in most cases, the Red Army was able to seize the strategic initiative for quite a long time and keep it in its hands. Blows against the enemy were usually delivered with increasing force, with practically no prolonged

pauses, which did not give him the opportunity to gain a foothold on the intermediate lines.

A new phenomenon in the strategy of the Red Army during this period was the conduct of strategic offensive operations by a group (two) of fronts. True, in those years this form had not yet received complete development, but the basic principles of its organization had already developed quite clearly. Such operations may include, in particular, the joint operation of the Southern and South-Eastern fronts in November 1919-January 1920 against the troops of General Denikin, as well as the operations of the Western and South-Western fronts in July-August 1920 g. against the Polish army. As a rule, they were distinguished by their large spatial scope and large operational-strategic results.

Significant development in those years was also received by the forms and methods of conducting strategic offensive operations. Depending on their goals, the ratio

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forces and means, the nature of the theater of operations, the grouping of forces, the length and outline of the front line - the fronts delivered concentric, enveloping or cutting blows. For example, in the summer of 1919, the Eastern Front, building on its success, dealt a deep cutting blow to the enemy. Autumn 1919 and winter 1919/1920. The southern and southeastern fronts carried out a similar blow during an operation against the troops of General Denikin. As a result, the strategic front of the White armies was torn apart, which made it possible to introduce large cavalry forces into the gaps that had formed and develop success to a greater depth.

Such a form of action as inflicting a series of crushing blows (2-4 or even more) was also widely used in order to isolate and defeat individual enemy groupings in parts. For example, in the counter-offensive of the Eastern Front in April-June 1919, in some operations a combination of different methods of action was used. Thus, in the strategic offensive operation of the Southern Front, carried out in the autumn of 1920 against the Russian army, cutting blows were combined with an attempt to encircle the enemy's operational groupings in the Upper and Lower Serogozhy region. Back in the autumn of 1918, an encirclement operation was also planned on the Eastern Front, but due to the lack of a sufficient number of mobile forces and means that could ensure a quick exit to the flanks and rear of the enemy, it failed. On the Southern Front in the fall of 1920, the encirclement of the enemy grouping was also unsuccessful, since the interaction between the adjacent armies of the front was disrupted. The 4th and 13th armies, forced to overcome the heavily fortified enemy defenses, were unable to timely use the success of the 1st cavalry army, which went behind enemy lines.

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„THE VOLVO ARMY

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Russian (October-1920) army

Wrangel elk to bring forces from non-attacked sections and the offensive acquired Scheme 29. The main methods of defeating a protracted character. An example is enemy during the civil war r p serve the counteroffensive of the South

front in October-November 1919, as well as the North Caucasian strategic offensive operation in 1920 G.

In general, the problem of breaking through the defenses into a civil war was not as acute as it was in the First World War, nevertheless, the fronts had to solve such a problem. Typically, a breakthrough was carried out by massing forces and means in the directions of strikes, creating a gap in the operational formation

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enemy, its expansion towards the flanks and in depth. Great importance was attached to the development of success through the skillful build-up of efforts from the depth, the use of reserves and decisive actions of mobile cavalry formations. Frontal and parallel pursuit of the retreating enemy was widely used. It was practiced especially successfully at the completion of the defeat of the troops of Admiral Kolchak by the 5th Army of the Eastern Front, as well as during the actions of the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Armies in the Crimea against the troops of General Wrangel.

At the same time, throughout the entire civil war in the Red Army, such a principle of strategy as consolidating the success achieved was clearly underestimated. This was the cause of a number of major defeats, especially on the Soviet-Polish front in August-September 1920.

An important indicator that determined the nature and characteristics of the strategic offensive operations of the Red Army during the years of the Civil War is data on their scope. The limits within which they fluctuated were extremely wide. Much here depended on the conditions of the theater of operations, the composition of the armed forces of the parties, and other factors. The width of the offensive zone was 350-1,500 km, and sometimes exceeded 2,000 km. The depth of advance of troops in some operations did not exceed 70-350 km, although on average it was 300-600 km, in rare cases it reached 900 and even 3,500 km, as was the case in the offensive of the Eastern Front in 1919-1920. usually ranged from 20 to 72 days, but sometimes exceeded 3-5 months, and on the Eastern Front it reached almost 7 months. The average daily rate of advance in 1919-1920. - 7-8 km per day, although on some days the troops advanced 15-20 km or more per day.

One of the distinguishing criteria for the success of offensive operations is the losses at the cost of which victory was achieved. In this regard, the indicators are very contradictory, moreover, the matter is complicated by the bias of Soviet statistics.

And yet it must be said that the absolute losses in many offensive operations, due to the limited number of troops participating in them, were not so great. However, in relation to the initial composition of the troops, the relative losses are characterized by very impressive figures. Thus, during the offensive in October-November 1919, the Southern Front lost only 2.5 thousand people killed, and 38.2 thousand people wounded, shell-shocked, sick and captured, or 35.3% of the initial combat strength of the front!?" Over 50% of the total losses were missing and deserters, which was due to the political fluctuations of the middle peasantry, the unwillingness of some Red Army soldiers to break away from their homes and the population's fatigue from the war.

The enemy also suffered heavy losses. For example, the Volunteer Army alone, while repelling this counter-offensive, lost about 30 thousand people, or 50% of its composition, in killed, wounded and captured!?"8.

On the Western Front from mid-November to the end of December 1919, the losses of its 7th Army alone amounted to about 8 thousand people killed, wounded, shell-shocked, captured, deserters, sick, frostbite, frozen or poisoned by gases, i.e. e. 22% of the total number of bayonets and sabers. But there were cases when success was achieved even with minor losses. Thus, the troops of the 5th Army from mid-December 1919 to mid-January 1920, acting in the direction of the main attack on the Eastern Front, lost only 8 people killed, and 31 people were wounded. During the same period, the army itself captured about 71.5 thousand enemy soldiers and officers! But this happened relatively rarely, since in most other operations the troops, as a rule, suffered tangible losses. Particularly significant damage (irretrievable losses amounted to 368 thousand people) Red

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The army suffered in operations against the Armed Forces of the South of Russia, the troops of General Wrangel and the Polish army in 1919-1920!

During the Civil War, the Red Army was forced to resort to strategic defense as well. In the theory and practice of Soviet military strategy, such defense was seen as a forced form of action. Usually it was undertaken and carried out with the aim of disrupting the offensive of large enemy groupings in a certain theater of operations or strategic direction, holding important lines and areas, and creating conditions for launching a counteroffensive.

The complexity of organizing and conducting strategic defense in 1918 and early 1919 was that it

had to be organized and carried out in conditions when the Red Army had not yet completed its strategic deployment. Its distinctive feature at this time is the absence of continuous fronts, high maneuverability and activity.

Strategic defensive operations were carried out at all stages of the civil war. Basically, they were undertaken when the enemy managed to seize the initiative. In the overall balance of military operations, they occupy approximately 20% of the time.

The main feature of the strategic defense of the Red Army was the combination of defense in one theater of operations or strategic direction with a strategic offensive in other directions or theaters. For example, in the spring and summer of 1919, a strategic defense behind the Western Theater and a strategic offensive in the Eastern Theater were carried out simultaneously. A no less characteristic feature of strategic defense was that it was carried out actively, on broad fronts, for a long time, with an almost equal balance of forces and means. So, the defense of the Eastern Front in the spring of 1919 against the advancing troops of Admiral Kolchak was carried out on a front of more than 1800 km for 55 days. At the same time, at the beginning of March, the front troops included 94.8 thousand bayonets, 8.9 thousand sabers, while the opposing armies had 118.5 thousand bayonets and sabers. And by mid-July, the troops of the Southern Front had switched to strategic defense on almost a 2,500-kilometer front. By this time, they numbered 157.6 thousand bayonets and 25.8 thousand sabers, and the Armed Forces of the South of Russia opposing him - 104.5 thousand bayonets and 50.9 thousand sabers³³.

The activity of the strategic defense was expressed in the stubborn holding of positions in order to exhaust and bleed the enemy as much as possible, to deprive him of freedom of maneuver, and in addition to try to inflict strong counterattacks on the flank and rear of his groupings with the expectation of creating favorable conditions for going over to the counteroffensive. In this regard, the active defense of the Eastern Front in the winter of 1918/1919 is especially indicative. and in the spring of 1919, the Southern Front in the summer and autumn of the same year, the Southwestern Front in late April and early May 1920. Moreover, the greatest success was achieved in cases where counterattacks were delivered along the flanks of the advancing enemy and into gaps between his troops, as was the case, for example, during the organization of a counterattack by the troops of the Eastern Front on the left flank of the Western Army and the troops of the Southern Front in the Orel and Voronezh regions on both flanks of the Volunteer Army. In the course of strategic defense, the troops of the Red Army more than once found themselves in a difficult, if not critical, situation.

One of the difficult problems is the creation and restoration of a strategic defense front. It was precisely this problem that arose with all its acuteness in connection with the onset of the offensive of the armies of Germany and Austria-Hungary, their subsequent occupation of Belarus and Ukraine. In order to put a "limit on the spread of the Germans inland", the Petrograd Revolutionary Defense Committee on March 3, 1918 adopted a resolution on the creation of the Northern and Western groups of troops, the Ukrainian and Southern

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sections of the curtain detachments, organizing the defense of the most important military-political centers of the country - Moscow and Petrograd.

The plan for the defense of Moscow was developed by the military leader of the Moscow region K. K. Baiov, a former general. On March 20, 1918, he was presented in the form of a report to the Supreme Military Council. The plan provided for the solution of a number of successive tasks: containment of the enemy in the probable directions of his offensive; defense of individual nodes on the outskirts of Moscow; defense of the Moscow railway junction; the possible abandonment of Moscow and the containment of German troops east of the city until the approach of strategic reserves. At the same time, Baiov took into account that it would hardly be enough time, forces, and means to create a continuous front line. "Therefore, fortification work," he noted, "should consist in creating centers of resistance in all the most important directions, which, in their totality and in combination with the existing local obstacles in the form of rivers, will constitute the strategic positions of the troops of the region"! In a word, a transition to a mobile defense with elements of heavily fortified positions in strategically important areas was planned. At the same time, it was planned to build several defensive lines (frontiers). The first line included separate fortified positions built 200 km from Moscow around the most important railway junctions. The second line, which consisted of several intermediate positions, was supposed to pass 50-100 km from the city, and a total fortified position about 100 km long was to be 25-35 km from the city. This third line was supposed to cover Moscow from the north, west and south, and its capacity was designed for 12-15 infantry divisions. The project received support from the military head of the Supreme Military Council, Bonch-Bruевич, although he believed that due to the lack of engineering forces and means, it was not possible to put the plan into practice.

At the same time, under the leadership of the Supreme Military Council, the task of organizing the defense of Petrograd was being solved. On the outskirts of the city, it was planned to create a number of defensive lines. For this purpose, they were going to involve the engineering and construction squads of the Central Committee for Military-Technical Assistance and the local population! However, the work was carried out too slowly, and most importantly, they were not linked to the general organization of the defense of the Republic. Therefore, on May 31, 1918, Bonch-Bruевич presented his report to Trotsky. His proposal boiled down to creating a "general system of fortification preparation for the defense of the country" in case of war with Germany. The project of such a system was developed by the State Defense Collegium of the Main Military Engineering Directorate under the leadership of military engineer K.I. Velichko. In accordance with it, it was planned to equip a fortified strip of 2-3 lines with a total length of more than 1 thousand km. The strip was supposed to go around Lake Onega, and then pass along the line of the river. Svir - Lake Ladoga - Petrograd - r. Volkhov—Lake Ilmen—Kholm—Nevel—Slonim—Bryansk—Orel. For its occupation, it was planned to allocate 16 infantry divisions. The cost of engineering equipment for the fortified belt was estimated at 1.5 billion rubles. 137 However, this project could not be implemented: there was neither money, nor strength, nor time. Therefore, fortified positions were erected only in the area of Petrograd, Kholm and Smolensk. And yet it was not the main thing. The fact is that, in addition to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, German troops were withdrawn from the demarcation line to the west. That is why the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic in September 1918 decided

The idea of engineering preparation of the country's defense was further developed in the report of Commander-in-Chief Vatsetis to the Council of People's Commissars and the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic of October 7, 1918.

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lines and POLOS, but to create in each defensive area its own system of defensive points and reinforced "in engineering terms, local objects". In total, it was planned to equip 3 defensive regions on the Northern Front, 12 on the Eastern Front, and 5 on the Southern Front, and due to the lack of forces in the Western Region of the defense, prepare field positions of a circular type at the most important railway junctions!33.

The proposals of the Commander-in-Chief were reflected in the draft of a general system for the early strengthening of the fronts, developed by November 1918 under the leadership of Velichko. It was based on field fortified areas, which were intended to cover the main operational areas and protect politically, economically and strategically important centers. In April of the following year, at a meeting of inspectors of front engineers, "Instructions for strengthening field positions" were developed. They were supposed to be created in the form of "an intermittent row of fortified strongholds (sections) with more or less significant gaps between them." And in the event that the struggle for them becomes decisive for the front, it was envisaged to develop the defense in depth "up to two lines according to the type of fortified group" ""°. In total, over 20 fortified areas were built in 1918-1920, among them are the largest: Petrogradsky, Moskovsky, Samara, Saratov, Tula.

Simultaneously with the organization of field defense under the leadership of the Supreme Military Council, and then the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, work was carried out to organize the air defense of Moscow, Petrograd and other administrative and industrial centers. So, from March to May 1918, 3 aviation detachments, 2 automobile and 6 railway anti-aircraft batteries were subordinate to the head of the air defense of Petrograd. Air defense For the air defense of the troops that covered the demarcation line in the west of the country that summer, 6 aviation detachments were involved "?. In order to warn of enemy air raids, signal posts were deployed - air observation, warning and communications posts - 100-120 km from cities.

Since the beginning of the civil war, the creation and restoration of the strategic defense front was carried out taking into account the peculiarities of the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces, based on the specific situation and using the forces of the armies and fronts operating in the corresponding directions. The basis of the defense was usually formed by combined arms (field) armies deployed in a line. Cavalry armies and corps, as a rule, were used to strengthen the defense and eliminate the enemy in the most important areas and theaters of military operations. The gaps formed in the defense were most often strengthened by regrouping troops from neighboring directions or by bringing the reserves of the High Command into battle.

In the future, strategic defense was carried out by active and newly created fronts, taking into account the specific situation. In particular, in the summer of 1920 it was carried out by the Eastern and Western fronts. The largest and most important defensive operations of the Red Army are presented in Table 3 (p. 176).

It should be noted that the Red Army often at one and the same time defended in some directions, while attacking in others. Thus, the Western Front in the spring and summer of 1919 was on the defensive, while the Eastern Front advanced in its central sector and defended on the flank.

Strategic defense was carried out most often in the form of defensive operations by fronts or part of the forces of one front. Its main goal was to wear down the enemy, bleed him dry, free up forces for action in the main directions, and subsequently create favorable conditions for the transition

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Table 3. The scope of the most important strategic defensive operations of the Red Army*

Forces and means to start operation Stripe | Continuer

Operations

division time | bayonets and | guns | | machine guns, | defense, | offensiveness (brigades) of action. days Defense of the Eastern Front 70 (25.05–2.08.1918) 1000 Defense of the Eastern Ont 360 1880 1800 52 (03.03–27.04.1919) 303 1358 Defense of the Southern Front 566 2712 2500 42 (03.07–13.08. 1919) 384 1206 Defense of the Southern Front 799 3138 2500 28 (13.09–10.10.1919) 335 1327 Defense of the Southwestern Front 314 1866 over 31 (03.07–13.08.1920) 348 840 600 Defense of the Southern Front 768 3312 over 37 (21.09–27.10) .1920) 193 998 600

in a counteroffensive. At the same time, within the framework of strategic defense, not only defensive, but also offensive operations of an operational scale were used.

The defense was, as a rule, focal in nature, counting on holding the most important areas, lines, settlements, commanding heights and various defiles. Particular attention was paid to the defense of cities. They turned into powerful knots of resistance. For example, on the outskirts of Petrograd in 1919, 3 defensive lines were built, the city itself was divided into 11 nodes of resistance, and houses, streets and squares were prepared for defense. The defense of Tsaritsyn, Uralsk, Orenburg and other cities was carefully prepared. By

type of defense forces in some cases, the defense of important lines was also organized. For example, in 1920, on the Kakhovka bridgehead, 3 lines of defense (external, main and bridgehead) were created with a whole system of trenches, platforms for machine guns, communication passages, shelters, wire and other barriers. At that time, for the first time in the Red Army, an attempt was made to organize anti-tank defense: guns for direct fire at tanks, land mines were installed; provided for the maneuver of the so-called maneuverable artillery batteries and platoons in tank-dangerous directions. On the whole, the defense was not deep, and the formation of troops was one-echelon with very limited reserves: | -2 divisions and several brigades in the front.

In the conduct of defense, the stubborn holding of lines and positions was combined with flexible maneuver of forces and the delivery of decisive counterattacks and counterattacks, which corresponded to the general maneuvering nature of the war. An example of the high activity of the defense is the counterattack of the 13th and 8th armies of the Southern Front (August 1919) in the Kharkov direction. Thanks to him, for more than half a month, it was possible to delay

* Compiled based on the author's materials In the numerator - according to the troops of the Red Army, in the denominator - according to its opponents.

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press the Volunteer Army's offensive against Kursk and gain time to reinforce the troops of the front with the reserves of the High Command and units transferred from other fronts.

At the same time, it should be noted that the troops were not always able to hold the lines assigned to them. In a number of cases, the White armies broke through the front and defeated individual groupings. Sometimes the situation became simply critical. At times, extraordinary measures were taken to eliminate breakthroughs, to organize the withdrawal of forces from under the enemy's blow, and to stabilize the front line. Retreat was allowed as an extreme measure of defense in order to provide a more favorable environment for preparing a decisive offensive. When withdrawing or retreating, the command of the Red Army usually set their limits in advance, demanding iron stamina and dedication from their subordinates. Withdrawal, as a rule, began at nightfall and was carried out under the cover of strong rear guards formed from rifle units, cavalry and armored detachments. While some armies (formations) defended on the line they occupied, others retreated to the next line. For example, while the Eastern Front was advancing against the troops of Admiral Kolchak, the armies of the Southern Front retreated to the central regions of the country. In the autumn of 1919, when the struggle against the troops of General Denikin entered a decisive phase, the troops of the Eastern Front, under pressure from superior enemy forces, temporarily withdrew to the river. Tobol, and the depth of retreat ranged from 180 to 390 km.

In the Red Army, both in the strategic offensive and in the strategic defense, all types of the Armed Forces were actively used. True, the decisive role was assigned to the ground forces, although organizationally they had not yet taken shape in a separate form.

The main part of the tasks was assigned to rifle troops and artillery. Cavalry formations and formations, as a rule, were used in the main directions for operations in the operational depth. Armored forces were used to reinforce infantry and cavalry formations in the main directions. Aviation played a large role in operations. The main efforts of the Air Force were aimed at supporting ground troops and combating enemy aircraft, conducting operational and strategic reconnaissance in the main directions to a depth of 100 to 150 km. The command sought to use aviation massively in the interests of the fronts that were solving the main tasks.

The navy in the civil war acted, as a rule, in cooperation with the ground forces. Its main tasks were: covering the coastal flanks of the armies; participation in the defense of the sea coast; fight against enemy naval forces; assistance to the coastal and river flanks of the ground forces with coastal and naval artillery fire, as well as landings; sea transportation. A significant part of the sailors (about 75 thousand people) took an active part in the hostilities on the land fronts!. However, the fleet also undertook independent operations: it conducted an anti-blockade fight against the interventionist fleet in the Gulf of Finland, reconnaissance and sentinel service; laid minefields, carried out minesweeping, etc. Typically, such operations were carried out near their coast and in the areas of naval bases.

In 1918, a unique operation was carried out, which went down in history under the name of the Ice Campaign: then the Baltic Fleet was relocated from Reval (Tallinn) and Helsingfors (Helsinki) to Kronstadt. In total, 236 warships and support vessels were transferred, which then played an important role in joint operations with the ground forces.

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In some operations, the fleet was involved in fire suppression of the enemy, landing operations and ensuring the crossing of water barriers. He had to solve similar tasks, for example, during the defense of Petrograd and Kronstadt in 1918-1919, forcing the mouth of the Dnieper and in the area of the Kakhov bridgehead in 1920. A large landing force was landed during the Anzelian operation. The Volga-Caspian military flotilla carried out a demonstrative shelling of the coast west of the city of Anzali, delivered artillery strikes from the sea against coastal batteries and land positions of the enemy, and at the same time, east of Anzeli, landed a landing force of 2 thousand people.

Military fleets played an important role. So, in the summer of 1920, the Azov military flotilla provided significant assistance to the rifle troops in their fight against the superior forces of General Wrangel in the Kuban. in rout

landings of the enemy, it used various methods and methods: laying mines on the paths of the probable movement of the landing force, blocking it from the sea and destroying naval artillery with fire. Both the navy and the river fleets made extensive use of minelaying. The most active use of minefields in combination with coastal artillery covering them and ship patrols (mine-artillery positions) was used in the Baltic, Black and Azov Seas, as well as on rivers.

The civil war was characterized by the wide scope of the guerrilla-rebel struggle, which sometimes acquired strategic importance. For the centralized leadership of the partisan-insurgent formations, in January 1918, the Central Headquarters of the partisan detachments was created under the Operations Department of the People's Commissariat of Military Commissariat, which was transformed in September of the same year into the Special Intelligence Department of the Operations Department of the RVSR Field Headquarters. In addition, a special network of party organs was created. Since September 1918, in Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states, after their occupation by German troops, the Central Bureau of Communist Organizations of the occupied regions under the Central Committee of the RCP (b) operated. From the second half of 1919, this leadership was carried out by the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of the republics: in the Ukraine through the Front Office of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U, and in Belorussia and Lithuania through the Bureau of Illegal Work. In September 1918, the Don Bureau of the RCP(b) was formed, which was reorganized into the Don Committee of the RCP(b) in September 1919. From October 1917 to April 1920, the general leadership of the rebel and partisan formations in the Transcaucasus and the North Caucasus carried out the Caucasian Regional Committee of the RCP(b), which was later transformed into the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b). In the Urals and Siberia, the Siberian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b), established in December. In the Far East since March 1920 - the Far Eastern Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP (b), and in the Black Sea region - the North Caucasian Regional Committee of the RCP (b), transformed in March 1920 into the Kuban-Black Sea Regional Committee of the RCP (b).

Partisan-insurgent formations with their surprise strikes paralyzed the work of the enemy rear, disorganized the supply and command and control of troops, and pulled part of the forces of the enemy armies from the front.

The command of the fronts and armies maintained close contact with the partisans, coordinated and directed their efforts towards solving the common tasks of defeating the enemy. As far as possible, assistance was provided to the partisans with weapons and ammunition, propaganda literature, etc. Many cities were liberated from the enemy by the joint efforts of the Red Army troops, partisans and insurgent workers.

At the same time, both the High Command of the Red Army and the command of the fronts were very afraid of the possible negative impact of partisanship on regular troops. Thus, according to the report of the Chief of the Field Staff P.P.

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Council of the Republic | On December 1919, he decided to stop the formation of partisan detachments, and transfer the existing detachments to the special purpose detachments, spare parts, or even disband them. This resolution found its development in the decisions of the revolutionary military councils of the fronts and armies, taking into account the specific situation and the state of the partisan formations. For example, on December 15, 1919, the Revolutionary Military Council of the 5th Army of the Eastern Front, "in order to avoid infection of the advancing red regiments by partisans and a repetition of the Makhnovshchina," ordered all partisans to be taken to the rear, where all undisciplined ones should be fired, partisan detachments should be reinforced by loyal Soviet authorities. commanders and commissars, and if the partisans refuse to obey, subject them to "merciless punishment" and not to give them "no supplies"! 46. In total, from December 1919 to March 1920, the 5th Army included the following partisan units and subunits: 20 infantry and 3 cavalry regiments, 6 cavalry and | engineering division, [] infantry and 2 railway battalions" 7.

During the civil war, the command of the Red Army, relying on world experience, at the same time solved many issues of military strategy in a very original and original way, especially those related to the organization of the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces, planning operations, conducting strategic regrouping of troops, creating and using strategic reserves.

In contrast to the wars of the past, the strategic deployment of the Red and White armies was carried out not according to a predetermined plan, but according to an administrative order in theaters of military operations and areas that were not operationally prepared. Only after a more or less clear geographical separation of the parties did it acquire a relatively planned character, but even in the future there were no pronounced boundaries between the constituent elements of deployment - mobilization, concentration of forces in the theater of military operations and operational deployment. All these tasks, as a rule, were solved in parallel both in the center of the country, and in peripheral territories, and in threatened areas, and in war zones.

For the first time, the strategic deployment plan was considered and approved by members of the RVSR on September 9, 1918. At the suggestion of Commander-in-Chief Vatsetis, it was planned to deploy the Northern Front along the Vyatka-Vologda railway line and to the north, the Eastern Front in the Volga region, the Southern Front on the Don, Ukraine, the Lower Volga and the North Caucasus, Western defense area - along the demarcation line! *. In January 1919, in connection with the evolving military-political situation and the tasks being solved by the Red Army, the Ukrainian Front was created, in February - the Western, in August - the Turkestan, in October - the South-Eastern Front. Subsequently, the fronts were deployed in direct proportion to the situation.

The system of strategic planning of operations has acquired somewhat unusual forms. At the beginning of the civil war, planning was not always possible because the bodies of the highest military leadership were still in the initial stage of formation, there were no trained personnel, and there was no experience in planning military operations on a large scale, and even in relation to the peculiarities of the civil war. In addition, when developing strategic plans, the staffs have not yet learned to take into account the objective

the political and military situation, the alignment of forces within the country and in the international arena.

The first strategic plan of military operations of the Red Army, developed by Commander-in-Chief Vatsetis, was sent to the Central Committee of the RCP (b) and the RVSR in early October 1918. According to this plan, the immediate strategic goal was to defeat the enemy on the Southern Front, where the main forces of the Red Army were concentrated by that time. The Eastern Front was to continue the offensive until reaching the line of Yekaterinburg, Chelyabinsk and further into the depths of Siberia. Stra

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The Vatsetis strategic reserve was supposed to be deployed on the basis of two infantry divisions being formed. This plan, with a number of amendments, was approved. In April 1919, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Eastern Front submitted to the Commander-in-Chief a plan to launch a counteroffensive in order to defeat the troops of Admiral Kolchak¹⁴³.

The Commander-in-Chief regularly submitted to the RVSR (copies to the Central Committee of the RCP (b), Council of People's Commissars, Council of Defense) reports on the strategic situation on the fronts with a detailed assessment of the military-political situation in the country as a whole and in theaters of military operations, brief information about enemy groups and their troops, with tasks for the fronts and plans for operations in theaters of operations, measures for the strategic regrouping of friendly troops and engineering training for theater of operations, etc.¹⁴⁴

The Field Headquarters of the RVSR was responsible for the detailed planning of strategic operations and the organization of their comprehensive support. He developed plans, directives and orders to the fronts, central and main departments, individual armies, organized their strategic interaction. At the same time, measures were taken to create strategic groupings and provide them with comprehensive support, organize and conduct inter-theater and inter-front regroupings. control over the preparation of troops (flotillas) and staffs for combat operations. The High Command of the Red Army paid special attention to the secrecy of the preparation of operations and the suddenness of their conduct.

The main method of work of the High Command and the Field Headquarters was the administrative method. In the course of negotiations over a direct wire, the Commander-in-Chief and the Chief of the Field Staff gave instructions to the commanders and chiefs of staff of formations on the preparation of considerations for the further conduct of hostilities, on the procedure for replenishing personnel and supplying troops, and possible terms of readiness. At the same time, various options for tasks, the procedure for organizing and conducting regroupings were discussed. The use of this method of work contributed to bringing the leadership closer to the troops, increasing the efficiency of command and control, which ensured coordination of the actions of the fronts and armies.

After the development of the strategic operation plan, directives were sent to the fronts signed by the Commander-in-Chief, one or two members of the RVSR or the military commissar of the Field Headquarters, and the Chief of the Field Headquarters. The directives indicated the purpose of the operation, tasks for the troops, the procedure for interaction with neighboring fronts or armies, the forces involved, the direction of the main attack and the massing of forces on it, the timing of readiness, etc. ¹⁴⁵ In the development of the directives, the front additionally received instructions, orders from the Commander-in-Chief and the Chief of the Field Headquarters of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic on certain operational and organizational issues.

Sometimes the RVSR and the Commander-in-Chief demanded from the Revolutionary Military Councils and front commanders considerations for conducting operations. In a number of cases, front commanders presented their views on their own initiative. An example is the report of the Commander of the Southern Front, Frunze, to the Commander-in-Chief dated 11 October, as well as reports to the Central Committee of the RCP (b), Lenin and the RVSR of October 19 and 26, 1920. Such a system of setting tasks, along with ensuring strict centralization of strategic leadership, made it possible for the commanders of the fronts (individual armies) to show broad initiative.

The sequential method of work was used less frequently. In this case, the associations received directives from the Commander-in-Chief, which indicated the purpose of the operation, the tasks of the troops, sometimes issues of interaction, the deadline for readiness for the operation and the presentation of the plan. Then work began at the headquarters of the fronts and individual armies.

When developing plans for strategic offensive and defensive operations, great importance was attached to the organization and conduct of strategic reconnaissance. Obtaining the most complete data on the military potential of the enemy, races

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the position of his forces, reserves, ideas and plans increased the reality and effectiveness of strategic planning.

In the difficult situation of the civil war, when various political forces and countries opposed the power of the Bolsheviks, it was necessary to evaluate the enemy not only in military, but also in political and ideological terms. Initially, these requirements were not always met, which often led to serious miscalculations. Therefore, Commander-in-Chief Vatsetis, in a telegram to the chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Sverdlov, and the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Lenin, dated November 25, 1918, wrote: "... I consider it necessary that more accurate political information be at my disposal, since the opposite leads to unexpected results in the work of our headquarters"¹⁴⁶ 53. The request of the Commander-in-Chief was granted, and already in his report on the strategic position of the RSFSR dated 1 December contained a fairly accurate assessment of the military-political situation on various fronts.

And yet, the analysis of the enemy, especially on the fronts, in many cases was based on superficial and far from complete data. This forced the head of the RVSR Field Headquarters F.V. Kostyaev in October 1918 to indicate to the front commanders: "Information about the enemy is extremely scarce. Not only are his forces unknown, but even his grouping is unknown. In this regard, he demanded: "Immediately send data about the enemy and strengthen intelligence in the most important operational areas!"¹⁴⁷.

Major miscalculations in assessing the situation were repeatedly made by the High Command of the Red Army itself. So, when preparing the counter-offensive of the Southern Front in August-September 1919, it planned to strike the main blow with the left wing of the Southern Front, i.e. from Tsaritsyn to Rostov through the Don region, where the Cossack population is due to the tough policy of the Soviet government and carried out by it "decossackization" was hostile to the Red Army. The underestimation of the political situation, as well as the violation of interaction between the Special Group of V. I. Shorin and the Shock Group of V. I. Selivachev, led to the failure of the offensive of the troops of the Southern Front.

When planning operations, the bodies of strategic leadership paid unremitting attention to monitoring and providing practical assistance to the command of the fronts and individual armies in carrying out the entire range of preparatory measures. For this, Trotsky, members of the RVSR, the Commander-in-Chief, and the head of the Field Staff went to the fronts. As a rule, on the ground they dealt with issues of preparing reserves, providing troops with military equipment, weapons, ammunition, food, and uniforms. At the same time, they gave instructions on the expedient use of forces and means in operations and clarified tasks, checked the accuracy of the implementation of the decisions of the Central Committee of the RCP (b), the Revolutionary Military Council and the Commander-in-Chief, took measures for their fullest possible implementation.

Significant assistance to the fronts was also provided by the central organs of strategic leadership in the course of operations, especially in ensuring the timely build-up of efforts, increasing the stability of the defense, and organizing command and control. During this period, the Commander-in-Chief and the Field Headquarters exercised control over the fulfillment of combat missions mainly through negotiations: by direct wire with commanders, members of the Revolutionary Military Councils and chiefs of staff of fronts and individual armies, and in some cases with army commanders and even with division chiefs. As a result of a detailed study of the situation, changes were often made to previously adopted plans, demarcation lines were specified, and strategic reserves were brought into battle.

During the civil war, the main attention of the bodies of strategic leadership was focused on the creation, accumulation and use of strategic reserves. At the beginning of the war, a lot of work on these issues was carried out by Vatsa

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yew, who already in October 1918, that is, a month after he took office, developed a plan for the formation of 1 infantry divisions as a reserve of the High Command. At the same time, at his own suggestion, the creation of a reserve army (5 rifle divisions) began in the zone of the Southern Front, which was under the operational subordination of the Commander-in-Chief himself. In January 1919, Vatsetis informed the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars that 7 reserve divisions were not yet fully ready, but they would only be enough to develop decisive actions on one front. "If the latter have to be developed against the superior forces of the enemy on several fronts," the Commander-in-Chief noted, "then the reserves that are currently being formed in our rear will not be enough and our Republic, from the point of view of the sufficiency of armed force for defense, cannot be considered beyond the conditions of threat" 5.

The situation with strategic reserves did not improve in the spring either. According to the Field Headquarters of the RVSR, there were only 60 thousand bayonets in the reserve of the Commander-in-Chief, who lacked weapons. According to the estimates of the Field Headquarters, in order to eliminate the threat from numerous opponents and secure the territory occupied by the Red Army, the strategic reserve should have been at least 150-200 thousand bayonets.

The problem of preparing strategic reserves was solved in two ways: non-military and military. The first method was the compulsory military training of workers and peasants who "do not exploit the labor of others" (the so-called Vsevobuch). Persons who were trained under the 96-hour program were subject to registration as persons liable for military service and, at the first call of the government of the RSFSR, were to "replenish the cadres of the Red Army." According to the Main Directorate of General Military Training, from September 1918 to September 1920, about 3.7 million people were trained in the Vsevobuch system, a rifle division and a brigade, 6 rifle and cavalry regiments, 9 personnel were formed and transferred to the Red Army reserve infantry regiments, 27 companies and 24 teams of scout skiers! ° *. These formations were clearly not enough to reinforce the fronts, which Vatsetis repeatedly reported to the Defense Council and the RVSR. Thus, in a report dated April 23, 1919, he noted: "... The combat tension of the eastern half of the RSFSR is weakened by the immense organization of Vsevobuch, which absorbs a huge mass of commanders and politicians. If we compare the number of commanders (instructors) in Vsevobuch and the number of such in the spare parts of the Red Army, then it turns out that in the spare parts throughout the Republic the number of command personnel is 5,350 people, while in Vsevobuch there are 24,000 of them!

Based on the fact that Vsevobuch was preparing "contingents for the distant future", the Commander-in-Chief proposed to liquidate him, and distribute the command staff among the spare parts of the Eastern Front. Vatsetis' proposal was partially supported by Lenin. From May 1919, the number of students in the Vsevobuch system began to decrease, and by July 1, 5,542 former officers and 24,392 non-commissioned officers were sent to the front or transferred to the military registration and enlistment offices to be sent to the active army!® °.

Due to the fact that the non-military method of preparing reserves did not justify itself, the military method became the main source of their accumulation: by creating reserve and reserve formations of the High Command, the All-Russian General Staff (spare parts in military districts), front-line and army reserve and military ev formations.

Reserve armies were at the immediate disposal of the main and front command. Unlike the spare parts of the military districts and the active army, they could not only prepare marching replacements, but also complete subunits, units and formations in a very short time. In order

The Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic of August 7, 1919 stated: "To create a reserve of the High Command, both in the form of ready-made military units and formations, and in the form of fully prepared staffing, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic decided: to form a reserve army in the region of the Middle Volga and the eastern provinces." Commander-in-Chief Kamenev noted that 40% of the most combat fronts were manned by the Reserve Army of the Republic, which gave the fronts 34% of the replenishment!?. From September 1919 to December 1920, in the Reserve Army, 2 rifle and 2 cavalry divisions, 8 rifle and 4 cavalry brigades, 3 rifle and 12 cavalry regiments, 201 marching battalions and 27 squadrons were formed and sent to the active army. , 19 artillery battalions and 14 batteries, 26 companies, teams and battalions of other military branches!6.

An important way of creating reserves was the withdrawal of formations from active fronts, as well as local mobilizations. So, by the time the armies of the Eastern Front crossed the Urals, their composition was almost half renewed due to the mobilized workers from the Urals. In a number of cases, party, Komsomol and trade union mobilizations were carried out. However, they did not give a significant increase in strength. For example, by June 1919 only 18,400 communists had been mobilized into the Red Army; in May 1920, 4,500 communists were sent to the Western and Southwestern fronts, and in August of the same year, 5,300 communists!"".

Strategic reserves were used both to create strike groups and to solve important tasks in the course of a strategic offensive or defense. Most of them were used, as a rule, in the main directions in order to build up the efforts of the troops. So, in October 1919, in the zone of the Southern Front, in the Oryol-Kursk direction, the Strike Group was concentrated as part of the Latvian Rifle Division, rifle and cavalry brigades. During the general offensive of the Southern and Southeastern fronts, strategic reserves were used to build up efforts in the main — Kursk-Kharkov-Donbass — direction. Sometimes strategic reserves were used to transfer efforts from one theater of operations to another. To this end, in the spring of 1920, the Commander-in-Chief withdrew the 1st Cavalry Army to his reserve, which was then transferred from the Southern Theater to the Western Theater, and in the autumn of the same year, vice versa, from the Western Theater to the Southern Theater.

In defensive operations, strategic reserves were used mainly to create a second strategic echelon in the rear of the front (for example, the Moscow-Tula defensive area on the Southern Front in 1919), to organize a strong defense on auxiliary axes and flanks (for example, on the South-Eastern Front in the period counteroffensives of the Southern Front in October 1919 and on the Caucasian Front in the winter of 1920), to fight the enemy grouping that broke through to the front rear (Southern Front in October 1919), as well as to deliver counterattacks and restore the lost position.

The High Command of the Red Army, based on the conditions of the situation and foreseeing the further course of events, constantly replenished its reserves, regrouped and strengthened those areas where the introduction of fresh forces could have the greatest effect. Thanks to this, a superiority in forces and means was achieved in the main directions, which in turn ensured the successful solution of the problems that arose in the course of operations. In December 1918, the reserve of the Commander-in-Chief had the Reserve Army (2 rifle and | cavalry divisions), in January 1919 - 7 divisions, in April - 2 rifle divisions and 2 brigades, in September - the Reserve Army of the Republic (2 rifle divisions) , in April 1920 - Reserve and 4 labor armies!®.

One of the most effective ways to actively influence the situation on a strategic scale is to conduct inter-theater and inter-front

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tag rearrangements. Usually they were carried out with the aim of shifting efforts from one theater of operations or strategic direction to another, changing the composition or creating new strike groups. The general management of strategic regroupings and control over their implementation was carried out by the High Command of the Red Army and the Field Headquarters of the RVSR. First of all, strategic reserves from the military districts and the Reserve Army of the Republic were transferred from one theater of operations to another. At the same time, regroupings of troops withdrawn from secondary sectors of the front were also undertaken.

The success of the regroupings depended on the following factors: the use of a favorable environment; advance preparation, careful planning and precise organization of marches and transports; speed and secrecy of troop movements; effective use of all types and means of communication; comprehensive support; sustainable and continuous management; constant control by the command and staffs.

The High Command of the Red Army and the Field Headquarters demanded that the front commanders and chiefs of staff constantly monitor the progress of regroupings and immediately report all troops sent to other fronts, or units arriving to them! 66. Orders for regrouping usually indicated: the number of troops to be transferred, the area of origin, the area of concentration, routes, the rate of transportation, the order of dispatch, those responsible for the implementation of the regrouping, the procedure for control, the deadline for submitting the plan for the movement. In an operational report and a special report, the headquarters of the fronts and individual armies transmitted information about the movement of troops to the Field Headquarters of the RVSR twice a day. In addition, every evening the duty officer at the Field Headquarters asked the duty officers at the headquarters of the fronts (individual armies) about the progress of the transportation. Judging by the experience of the transfer of the 27th and 51st rifle divisions from Siberia, the average speed of movement of echelons in 1920 was: in July a little more than 400 km per day, and in September - 400-500 km.

Such data also testify to the scope of inter-theatre and inter-front regroupings. In the summer of 1919, 8 rifle divisions and 5 brigades were transferred from the Eastern and Western fronts to the Southern Front, which by that time had become the main front of the Republic! 6. During the decisive operations of the South and South-East

fronts against the troops of General Denikin from September 1919 to March 1920, from other fronts he transferred 10 rifle and 3 cavalry divisions, 7 rifle and 2 cavalry brigades, as well as a large number of separate units and subunits of various branches of the military. In addition, the 11th Army, the Astrakhan fortified area and the Volga-Caspian military flotilla were transferred from the Turkestan Front to the command of the South-Eastern Front, and the 12th Army from the Western Front was transferred to the Southern Front!

The regrouping in the summer of 1920 under its own power of the 1st Cavalry Army from the North Caucasus to the Uman region in the zone of the Southwestern Front is indicative in terms of its scale and goals. In October of the same year, she was again transferred under her own power from the South-Western to the Southern Front, in the Berislav region. At the same time, 4 cavalry divisions, 2 separate cavalry brigades, about 921.1 thousand fighters, and a total of 67.9 thousand people took part in the regrouping! In general, during the war years, 70% of all divisions were transferred from one front to another, of which 52% of divisions operated on two, and 18% on three, four, and even five fronts!" Some divisions regrouped from one front to another 5-7 times or more.

Significant experience was gained in organizing and carrying out regroupings of the forces of the fleet and military fleets. Thus, in the summer of 1918, when the Eastern Front became the main one, the Volga military flotilla was formed. In early August, for its replenishment from the Baltic Fleet, along the Mariinsky water system,

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4 destroyers, about 120 guns and over 65 thousand shells were sent to the Volga! And the Astrakhan-Caspian flotilla was created to protect Astrakhan and fight the interventionists on the Caspian Sea. In November 1918, 6 destroyers and 3 destroyers arrived from the Volga military flotilla to reinforce it, and 4 submarines were delivered by rail from the Baltic Fleet.

Organizing and maintaining strategic interaction was a particularly responsible task for strategic leadership during the war. Its main content was the coordination of the efforts of the branches of the Armed Forces, as well as those fronts and the army that conducted operations in various theaters of military operations or in the strategic directions of one theater. Depending on the specific conditions of the armed struggle, the following methods of organizing strategic interaction were used: coordinating the efforts of strategic groupings of troops; coordinating the efforts of a group of (two) fronts and combat arms operating in the same theater or strategic direction and solving a single task; coordinating the efforts of the Red Army with the partisan-insurgent formations.

Strategic interaction was aimed at creating favorable conditions for the successful operations of the troops performing the main tasks. This was achieved by supporting their actions with active operations in other directions. So, during the counter-offensive of the Southern Front, the troops of the right wing of the South-Eastern Front (9th Army and the Consolidated Cavalry Corps) with their active actions fettered the main forces of the enemy Don Army and deprived him of the opportunity to use its formations to strengthen the Volunteer Army, according to which the Oryol- in the direction of Kursk, the troops of the Southern Front dealt the main blow.

During the defeat of the armies of Admiral Kolchak, interaction was organized between the Northern and Southern groups of troops of the Eastern Front, and in the fight against the troops of General Denikin, between the Southern (Southwestern) and Southeastern (Caucasian) fronts. So, at the end of May 1919, Commander-in-Chief Vatsetis demanded that the commanders of the Southern and Eastern Fronts "pay the most serious attention to establishing a strong and close connection between the 11th Army and the right-flank army of the Eastern Front!"

In defensive operations, when organizing interaction, special attention was paid to coordinating the efforts of troops inflicting counterattacks or defending in adjacent directions. It was no less important to tie up the enemy forces in secondary sectors by active actions in order to prevent the transfer of his troops to the main directions. For example, as a result of the stubborn defense of Astrakhan and Tsaritsyn in 1918, the troops of the Southern Front pinned down significant enemy forces and thus reliably covered the right wing of the Eastern Front, which was solving the main task.

In most cases, strategic operations managed to maintain stable interaction. But there were many examples when it was violated. This was especially evident in the actions of the troops of the Western and Southwestern Fronts in the war with Poland in 1920. Instead of concentrating the main efforts of the Southwestern Front on the right wing and further aiming the 1st Cavalry Army at Lublin and Warsaw to interact with The shock group of the Western Front, as provided for by the strategic plan, the main forces of the Southwestern Front were redirected to Lvov, which violated the coordination in the actions of the fronts. And all because the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front, having incorrectly assessed the general political and strategic situation, did not fulfill the requirements of the High Command. One mistake led to others. Having overestimated the initial actions of the fronts, the command did not take into account the possibility of

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tivnik. For its part, the Commander-in-Chief did not show due firmness in leading the fronts.

During the civil war, the High Command and the Field Headquarters of the RVSR paid great attention to the management of the rear of the Armed Forces. Logistic support was built in accordance with strategic plans, the specific situation that was developing, and the tasks of the fronts and the fleet (flotilla) in strategic operations. It was based on the principle of responsibility of the higher command for the comprehensive, complete and timely material, transport and medical support of subordinate troops. In the order of the Chairman of the RVSR Trotsky dated December 17, 1919, it was noted: "The most important issues of our military construction are centralized and at the same time flexible, adapting to local

organization of supply. The main efforts of the rear were concentrated on providing for the grouping of troops that performed the main task. The continuity of offensive operations was often achieved due to the fact that the troops acted on the principle of "bases ahead", that is, on the basis of the use of local means.

The first weeks and even months after the start of the civil war, the Red Army was provided mainly at the expense of those stocks of materiel that remained from the Russian army. When they ended, it became necessary to create a new supply system. The establishment in July 1919 of the positions of the Extraordinary Authorized Defense Council for Supply (Chusosnabarm) and the Extraordinary Authorized Fronts, which were included in the Revolutionary Military Councils of the corresponding fronts, the introduction of strict centralization of supply made it possible to rationally use all types of allowances, to satisfy primarily the needs of those fronts that were currently fulfilling the main strategic task. But there were cases when the troops did not receive many types of allowances from the deep rear, especially during the offensive against the armies of Admiral Kolchak and General Denikin. Nevertheless, the logistic authorities of the Armed Forces, in close cooperation with local authorities and civil departments, performed a significant amount of tasks for the rear support of the army and navy. From August 1918 to August 1920 alone, military purveyors, together with local authorities and the People's Commissariat for Food, procured 334 million poods of grain. In 1919-1920. 33,410 military trains passed through the railroads!⁶. This made it possible not only to ensure the timely transfer of troops to decisive fronts, but also to bring in the necessary material means to support the troops.

Along with the organization of central supply institutions, in the fall of 1919, an operational rear was created. Its depth was 500 km or more. The operational rear was bulky and inactive, which adversely affected the development of the operation. In the front rear it was planned to have a two-month supply of materiel available, but in fact they were 3-4 times less.

A difficult problem was the organization of medical and sanitary support for military operations. It took a lot of work to deploy a hospital base in the operational rear and inland. If in 1918 the hospital base in the Red Army had only 20,000 beds, then in 1920 there were already 400,000 of them. various epidemics, especially typhoid. In 1919, there were 216 people per thousand of army personnel, and in 1920 - 305 people who fell ill with typhus. But, despite these and many other difficulties, the problem of comprehensive logistics support for the Red Army during the tense armed struggle was basically resolved.

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A special task was the organization of the protection of the rear. It was solved by creating a special corps of troops of the Cheka (1918), which was not part of the Red Army, and then the troops of the internal security of the Republic (VOKhR). Their main task was to combat banditry and "counter-revolutionary rebellions". The total number of these troops reached 120 thousand people. They consisted of separate brigades (each with 4-6 rifle battalions and several cavalry squadrons). In the most difficult periods of the civil war, the troops of the VOKhR were used as a strategic reserve of the High Command, and in the second half of 1919, more than half of the formations of the VOKhR troops had to be included in the active army.

The military strategy of the White armies had much in common with the strategy of the Red Army. Both here and there, the main type of military action was the strategic offensive. Its main goal was to defeat the troops of the Red Army in one or another theater of operations, to capture the most important political and economic centers. However, compared with the operations of the Red Army, the strategic offensive operations of the Whites were distinguished by a relatively small scope along the front and in depth. So, in March and April 1919, the armies of Admiral Kolchak attacked to a depth of 180 to 360 km, and in September and October - from 90 to 120 km. The armed forces of the South of Russia in August and September 1919 carried out strategic offensive operations to a depth of 50 to 120 km, and in September and October - from 170 to 200 km. The Russian army of General Wrangel in September and October 1920 advanced to a depth of 70 to 180 km.

The strategic offensive of the White armies usually developed continuously over a period of 1-3 months and included a number of successive operations united by a single concept. Particularly characteristic in this regard is the offensive of General Denikin's troops in July-October 1919. But most often the Whites' offensive, despite initial successes, did not lead to the achievement of the strategic goals and the complete defeat of the Red Army. This is explained by the fact that there was no unity of action between the various groups, and besides, there were not enough reserves and material resources. The interventionist troops, due to the absence of formations in their composition, did not independently plan and conduct strategic offensive operations, but only took part in the operations of the White Guards.

When preparing a strategic offensive, the command of the white armies also paid great attention to choosing the direction of the main attack. Usually it was applied in the direction that in the shortest possible time led to vital economic and military-political centers, or it was directed against the grouping, on the defeat of which the stability of the strategic front of the Red Army depended. During the war, the White Guards also delivered strikes from different directions. Thus, in the spring of 1919, the main blow was struck in the east of the country, and in the summer the entire burden of the struggle against the Red Army was transferred to the south, to the zone of operations of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia. In accordance with the "Moscow directive" of General Denikin, in July 1919 the Whites delivered the main blow to Moscow." At the same time, it was planned to carry out auxiliary attacks on Moscow - from the north by the troops of General Miller, from the north-west - by General Yudenich, from the west - by the Polish army, from the east - by the troops of Admiral Kolchak. They did not succeed in carrying out this plan, and it was the desire of the leaders of the white regimes to act independently that ruined them.

The main method of conducting an offensive was to break through the defenses in two or more areas in order to develop success in converging directions for the subsequent encirclement and destruction of the defending groupings. But due to the lack of forces and means, the Whites could not complete a single encirclement operation.

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succeeded. In addition, they also used such methods as dissecting and crushing the defense (the offensive of the All-Russian Union of Youth in the fall of 1919), a frontal strike in order to dismember the opposing groupings of the Red Army, a rapid exit into the operational depth and the capture of important operational-strategic objects.

In defensive operations, a characteristic feature was the widespread use of counterattacks. Judging by the experience of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia, they were carried out by large forces of infantry and cavalry, supported by artillery, tanks and armored vehicles. Counterattacks, as a rule, were launched along the flanks of the Soviet armies in order to cover the main forces, encircle them and destroy them. Often they were also applied along the joints between divisions or armies.

The White Guard command skillfully applied the maneuver with forces and means. At the same time, regroupings were carried out both inter-army and inter-theatre. As an example of inter-theater regroupings, one can name the transfer in the autumn of 1919 of cavalry formations and units from the Caucasus to the Donbass in order to strengthen the Volunteer Army. Inter-army regroupings have also found wide application. So, in June 1919, the 7th Infantry Division and a tank division were transferred from the Volunteer Army to reinforce the Caucasian Army operating in the Tsaritsyno direction!

Unlike the Red Army, the deployment of the White Guard armies was carried out in areas in the rear of which there were sea communications. Thanks to this, they were provided with material and technical means at the expense of supplies from the Entente. In the Eastern and Southern theaters of military operations, which were the main ones, the strategic deployment of the armies of Admiral Kolchak and General Denikin took place along the most important communication lines that crossed the agricultural regions, where there was a strong support in the face of wealthy peasants and the Cossacks. Although these routes were of considerable length, they nevertheless made it possible to attract the necessary forces, and most importantly, to enter the Central Industrial Region as soon as possible.

In the North, the White Guard and interventionist troops were also deployed in advantageous operational directions, having in the rear a sea communication line convenient for supply. However, the sparsely populated area, the sympathetic attitude of the majority of the local population towards the Soviet government, and the difficult natural and climatic conditions did not allow the creation of mass armed forces in this theater.

Defense was considered a temporary type of military action and, as a rule, was organized hastily. The purpose of defensive operations was to disrupt the offensive of the Red Army troops, hold the occupied territory, gain time for the accumulation of forces and the preparation of a counteroffensive. Defensive groupings were created in the course of hostilities. In a number of cases, interventionists and White Guards used barbed wire on passive sectors of the front! ". Sometimes defensive positions and lines were equipped in advance in terms of engineering. Thus, in the second half of 1920, the troops of General Wrangel, with the assistance of French military specialists, created a powerful long-term defense in their rear on the Perekop and Chongar isthmuses. In July-August of the same year, Polish troops used for defense the line of German positions that had been preserved since the First World War. It included permanent defensive structures with concrete dugouts and machine gun nests. An example of a well-equipped defense is the positions of Admiral Kolchak's troops on the river. Vagai, in the zone of operations of the 3rd Army of the Eastern Front. Full profile trenches were dug here with three rows of barbed wire on both banks of the river!

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Relying on natural frontiers (large rivers, isthmuses on the Crimean peninsula), the White Guard command hoped to stabilize the front.

Worst of all, the Whites and the interventionists were with the reserves. Despite a number of forced mobilizations in the front line and in the deep rear, they were never able to create large strategic reserves. Therefore, the White Guard command was forced to remove badly battered units from the front and withdraw to the rear, where they were replenished as far as possible with personnel, and then formed a reserve of the army or corps. This is exactly what the command of the Volunteer Army did in December 1919. In the same month, the command of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia made an attempt to create a strategic reserve in the area of Tsaritsyn by forming the 5th Caucasian Cavalry and Combined Infantry Corps!. However, the rapid advance of the troops of the Southern Front to the foothills of the North Caucasus frustrated this plan.

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The civil war in Russia was fought in unprecedentedly fierce and bloody forms. Its consequences for many years were reflected in all aspects of the life of the state and the state of Russian society. The country was destroyed. The damage caused by the intervention amounted to about 50 billion gold rubles in value terms. Industrial production was reduced to 20-40% of the level of pre-revolutionary Russia, and agricultural production was halved.

The total demographic losses, according to incomplete data, amounted to about 13 million people. The armed forces of both sides also suffered the heaviest damage. Unfortunately, information about them is contradictory and still cannot be considered exhaustive. According to studies conducted in recent years, the Armed Forces of the RSFSR in 1918-1920. lost 5,024,088 people, of which irretrievable losses amounted to 701,847 people, or 14%

For all losses in 1917-1922, total losses amounted to 2,707,450 people, including 237,908 people for irretrievable losses'?. In total, during the years of the civil war, the Red Army lost 7,731,538 people, and irretrievable losses amounted to 939,755 people.

Accurate information about the losses of the opponents of the Red Army (White armies, interventionists and other forces) is not available. Presumably they make up about 2.5 million people'?

When analyzing losses, it is imperative to keep in mind at least two circumstances characteristic of a civil war. First, a significant part of the irretrievable losses are the so-called non-combat losses, including deserters. In the armies of the opposing sides, desertion took on a mass character. Only in the Red Army with | January 1919 by | On December 1920, 2,846,000 people were identified and returned to service, of which 837,000 were detained during raids!3. The number of deserters indicates that the population is immensely tired of the war.

Among the sanitary losses, the main part was due to epidemics. Typhus, cholera, dysentery, smallpox did not spare anyone. Only in 1918-1920. in the Red Army, the number of infectious patients was 2,253,405 people, of which 283,079 people died! 84.

Huge casualty figures testify not only to the tense nature of hostilities, but also to the costs in the art of war, mainly in the field of strategy. In order to achieve the set goals, the political and military leadership of both sides went to extreme measures, throwing insufficient

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trained troops, launched insufficiently prepared operations, in a number of cases sought to solve problems, regardless of anything.

Nevertheless, with all this, during the years of the civil war, the Russian military strategy achieved significant success, managed to solve a number of very complex problems related to the peculiarities of the armed struggle of that time.

A way out of the positional impasse that arose back in the First World War was found. The main type of strategic action on both sides was a decisive strategic offensive, and the main method of conducting it was inflicting deep frontal and flank attacks on the enemy in order to cut his front and destroy the main grouping of opposing troops in parts. During the war years, such a new form of strategic offensive as the operation of a group of fronts was born. A system of successive operations linked to a single plan began to be applied.

At the same time, the war confirmed that victory can only be achieved through a skillful combination of various types, forms and methods of strategic action. In this regard, strategic defense received further development.

Among the many problems that military strategy had to solve during the war, the most acute and difficult were the problems of organizing command and control, strategic interaction, providing, preparing and conducting strategic regroupings, and creating and accumulating strategic reserves. In their successful solution, the main role was played by strict centralization, which was based on the principle of responsibility of higher authorities and command. A growing influence on all sides of military operations during the war years was exerted by the moral, political and combat qualities of the personnel of the troops. The experience in the field of military strategy, accumulated during the years of the civil war, served as the basis for the creative development of its theory and practice in subsequent years.

Chapter Three

MILITARY STRATEGY BETWEEN THE CIVIL AND THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WARS

After the end of the civil war, the ruling party of the Bolsheviks and the government of the USSR, along with the restoration of the national economy, paid special attention to solving military problems. This logically followed, on the one hand, from the political attitudes towards building socialism in one country taken separately, and, on the other hand, from the fear of a new attack on the Soviet country. Thus, in the resolution of the Tenth Congress of the RCP(b), held in March 1921, it was indicated that the imperialists were preparing a war in the near future, into which the peoples of America, Asia and Europe would be drawn. Based on this, it was considered necessary to take all measures to strengthen the defense of the state, reconstruct the Armed Forces and increase their combat capability, as well as to develop military art, including military strategy. At the same time, the question of what a future war could be became of particular relevance.

1. Views on the nature of a future war

The transition to solving other problems depended on the development of common views on the possible nature of a future war. First of all, this made it possible to establish for what kind of war and with what adversary it was necessary to prepare, what tasks the Armed Forces would have to solve, how to carry out their construction, what tension the war would require from the people. Only by clarifying the characteristic features of such a war can one correctly determine the forms and methods of armed struggle, develop reasonable requirements for the military economy, the moral and political education of soldiers, establish expedient directions, the content of combat and operational training of troops, command personnel and headquarters .

It is quite natural that at that time the attention of politicians, military theorists, scientific organizations, heads of strategic bodies was riveted to the study of the problems of the nature of a future war.

Manager of the Armed Forces. Speaking at the Third Congress of Soviets of the USSR in 1925 with a report "The Red Army and the Defense of the Soviet Union", People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR M. V. Frunze said: "The defense system of any country should be based on an accurate and clear idea of the nature of military clashes possible for this country. The nature of the clashes must be assessed by us on the basis of taking into account three main points: 1) its social class content

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zhanna, 2) from the point of view of taking into account the number of enemies and the strength of their forces, and 3) from the point of view of taking into account those technical means that can and should be used in future wars"?.

In solving this problem, an objective analysis of the historical epoch, the actual alignment of military and political forces, the prospects for the development of means of armed struggle, the state and capabilities of our own army and navy, and the scientific and economic potential of the country were very important. Despite the fact that all these factors were taken into account, the nature of the conclusions drawn was more influenced by subjective moments, the ideological layers of Marxist-Leninist thinking, the provisions of official science, which, for many reasons, adapted itself to give a predominantly class assessment of all the phenomena of social life. including war. The contradictions between the truly scientific and the so-called "party" approach to the problems of military affairs could not but lead to serious differences in views on the war.

The political nature of the war.

In determining the political nature of a possible war, domestic military-theoretical thought proceeded from Lenin's position that "any war is inseparably connected with the political system from which it flows. The same policy that a certain power, a certain class within that power, pursued for a long time before the war, inevitably and unavoidably this same class continues during the war, changing only the form of action. From this, the conclusion naturally followed that the future war against the USSR is nothing but "reproduction on an extended basis of the class struggle between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the victorious proletariat"*. Revealing this situation, the Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR, I. S. Unshlikht, in 1925 believed that the war would be "the last struggle of world capital with the world proletariat"?.

The class character of a possible war was declared not only in official materials and speeches of politicians. It was substantiated in almost all Soviet theoretical works published at that time, and most of the military leaders of the Red Army accepted it as an axiom. Any other statements on this score were considered as bourgeois, and therefore deeply alien, and therefore mercilessly branded.

In March 1922, a meeting of the command and commissar staff of the Ukrainian and Crimean troops was held. Frunze, the commander of the troops at that time, declared that in the future it would be necessary to fight a coalition of imperialist states, that is, to wage a revolutionary-class war, not a national one, in order to ensure "the gains of our revolution from the assassination of internal and external class enemies against letariat"°. A similar point of view was held by Vatsetis, Kamenev, Tukhachevsky and others.

As for the causes and conditions for the emergence of a future war, Tukhachevsky, relying on Lenin, for example, argued that all wars are the product of class contradictions in society and their unleashing is predetermined by the essence of social antagonisms. In his opinion, the source of wars, "their genesis", lies in the very nature of capitalism, as long as it exists, the danger of the emergence of new wars will remain. In the article "War as a Problem of Armed Struggle," Tukhachevsky noted: "Without new redivisions of the world, imperialism cannot exist, because, as Lenin said, the capitalists now not only have something to fight about, but it's also impossible not to fight if you want to save capitalism, for without violent

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the redistribution of colonies, the new imperialist countries cannot receive the privileges enjoyed by the older (and less powerful) imperialist powers.

Budyonny was even more definite on this score. Based on the provisions of Lenin, in 1930 he divided the possible wars of the future into imperialist, colonial, national liberation and revolutionary class wars. To the latter type, he attributed the war between the USSR and "a coalition of imperialist great powers or with their vassals." Budyonny's conclusion boiled down to the following: will the Soviet Union strive to turn such a war "into a civil war between the world proletariat and the world bourgeoisie"?

Many other military theorists, including A. V. Golubev, wrote about the development of an imperialist war into a civil or national liberation war. In his reasoning, he proceeded from the fact that imperialism, waging war between its separate groupings, would be "forced to wage war at the same time against the working class of the belligerent countries." R. S. Ziffer, in his article "Characteristics of the Coming War," argued that in the event of an attack on the USSR, the war would take on a class character with elements of a civil war. G. S. Isserson adheres to a similar point of view in the article "The Evolution of Operational Art." In his opinion, the revolutionary class character of the future war predetermines the onset of a new era of military art.

An ideologized approach to assessing the political nature of a future war was also enshrined in official documents. Thus, in the Provisional Field Manual of the Red Army of 1925, it was noted: "Contradictions between the interests of the bourgeois states and the USSR, if sharply exacerbated, can lead to open organized armed struggle, i.e., to war." It was further emphasized that the coincidence of the interests of the Red Army and the oppressed working people of the whole world "gives it a huge moral advantage over the armies of the bourgeois

In the 1930s, the orientation toward the revolutionary class essence of a future war became even more pronounced. In the periodical press, the main emphasis was placed on the development of the "Leninist stage in the field of military theory", the overcoming of "all bourgeois military theories", the defeat of "counter-revolutionary cadres and their defeatist theories"³.

JV Stalin encouraged these demands in every possible way, constantly repeating about the approach of a new war and that one should prepare for a deadly battle with the enemy both politically, and morally, and in military-technical terms. At the same time, he emphasized the importance of using class stratification in the camp of the enemy. At the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, held in 1934, Stalin said: "It (the war - Ed.) will be the most dangerous for the bourgeoisie, also because the war will take place not only on the fronts, but also behind enemy lines. The bourgeoisie can have no doubt that the numerous friends of the working class of the USSR in Europe and Asia will try to strike at the rear of their oppressors, who have started a criminal war against the fatherland of the working class of all countries.

In the context of the emerging cult of personality, one after another, articles began to appear in the periodical press, full of praise for the wisdom of the leader, his views on the war and various problems of military affairs. In this regard, Voroshilov's article "Stalin and the Red Army" is especially indicative, as well as articles published in the pages of the journal "Military Thought", which were written by various authors. Thus, for 1939, the articles by A. Kononenko "Lenin-Stalin's Teachings on Modern Wars" and N. A. Levitsky "Comrade Stalin's Military Leadership" are noteworthy. The latter argued that Stalin's statements on military-theoretical issues "constitute classic examples of practical combat

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leadership and Marxist military thinking from which generations of Red Army commanders will learn.

In the orders of the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs (since 1934, People's Commissar of Defense) Voroshilov, as a priority, it was required to study the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of war and the army. In the training tasks for 1934, the commanders of the Red Army were asked to be "fully armed with the revolutionary teachings of Marx-Lenin-Stalin, keeping in mind that there is no such area of practical work in the Red Army where you can do without Marxist-Leninist theory!"

Particular attention began to be paid to the development of the so-called new "proletarian" method of waging war on the basis of Lenin's teachings on war and the works of Stalin. The review of the collection "Against Menshevik Idealism in Questions of War and Military Affairs" noted: "Now we have entered the stage when the army leadership and the army as a whole are practically forging this weapon of the world proletarian revolution, this new method of waging war, which is the military expression of new social relations"! The military section of the Communist Academy, whose members actively fought against any dissent in their midst, was rightfully considered a preacher of the Marxist-Leninist theory in military affairs.

On the whole, in the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet military strategy proceeded from the possibility of war both between the imperialist powers and their coalition against the USSR. Moreover, there was no unity in determining which of these wars is most likely. Some military theoreticians believed that the most possible war was between the leading imperialist powers over the division of the world. But the majority assumed that it would arise between the imperialist countries and the Soviet Union. Stalin adhered to the same point of view. However, already after the Second World War, which completely refuted such a conclusion, he gave the following explanation of what had happened: "... Theoretically, the contradictions between capitalism and socialism were stronger, but in practice, the contradictions within the capitalist world at the moment turned out to be sharper, which led to a clash between the imperialist powers, above all among themselves.

It must be admitted that the assessment of the possible alignment of military-political forces in a future war against the USSR in theoretical studies and in the practice of strategic planning in the period between the civil and Great Patriotic wars changed several times. In 1926, for example, the military theorist Ya. M. Zhigur argued in his article "The Threat of War" that the main military danger to the country was created on its western borders. In his opinion, this was due to the following aspects: the resumption of the Polish-Romanian military alliance, directed against the USSR by its edge; the conclusion by Romania of treaties and military agreements with Italy and France; the existence of actual military cooperation between Poland, Latvia and Estonia; the presence of the Polish-French union treaty and military convention, Poland's agreements with Czechoslovakia, the Little Entente, Latvia and Estonia, Romania with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. "All this taken together," wrote Zhigur, "created significant foreign-political prerequisites for preparing our neighbors, under the direct pressure of England, for a war against our Union"*.

Approximately the same assessment underlay the real strategic planning. In the 1920s and early 1930s, the headquarters of the Red Army believed that the states that were clearly hostile to the Soviet Union were, first of all, Great Britain, France, Poland and Romania, and partly Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It was believed that, in the event of an attack by these countries on the USSR, the USA, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece could join them or provide them with

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masquerading their military-economic resources and communications. In the Far East in the 1920s, China was considered as a real enemy. With the capture of Manchuria by the Japanese in 1931, Japan naturally became the main enemy of the USSR in the Far East. It was assumed that, in the event of difficulties for the Soviet Union in the war in the European theater, Japan could use them to present its

Accordingly, at that time, three possible options for a future war were envisaged:

- attack on the borders of the USSR by the armed forces of Poland, Romania, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, supported by their material and technical means of Great Britain and France, but the neutrality of Germany;
- attack on the western borders of the Soviet Union by the armed forces of neighboring states, partially supported by the armed forces of Great Britain, France and other major imperialist powers; at the same time, the British Navy and Air Force will try to use the bases of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania;
- an attack simultaneously on the western, southern and eastern borders of the USSR by the armed forces of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, France and Great Britain (through Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan), the Manchu militarists and Japan!

However, preference was given to the first option.

From the mid-1930s, when the military-political bloc of Germany, Italy and Japan took shape, assessments in the USSR changed dramatically. It was believed that he should be ready for a war on two fronts: in the west against Nazi Germany and its allies, and in the east against Japan. Great concern at that time was the position of Great Britain, France and the USA. Many Soviet political and military figures were convinced that the goal of Western democracies was to set Germany and Japan against the USSR. On this score, the report of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of the 18th century to the Party Congress directly stated: "The policy of non-intervention shows a desire, a desire not to prevent the aggressors from doing their dirty work, not to prevent, say, Japan from getting involved in a war with China, and even better with the Soviet Union, not to prevent, say, Germany from getting bogged down in European affairs, getting involved in a war with the Soviet Union, letting all participants in the war get bogged down deep in the mire of war, encouraging them in this on the sly, letting them weaken and exhaust each other, and then, when they are sufficiently weakened, to appear on the stage with fresh strength, to speak, of course, "in the interests of peace," and to dictate their conditions to the weakened participants in the war? In the late 1930s, in connection with the uncompromising position towards the USSR, which was taken by the Western powers during the war with Finland, Great Britain and France were added to the potential opponents of the USSR, except for Germany and Japan.

In 1941, on the very eve of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Union finally decided on the main opponents. It was believed that these would be Germany and Japan. It should be noted that even before that, in the theory of Soviet military strategy, these two states were defined as the main sources of military threat, but its level was clearly underestimated. Thus, L. S. Amiragov, in his article "On the nature of a future war," wrote back in 1934 that it was quite possible to expect the formation of a coalition of countries against the USSR, led by Germany and Japan. But, according to him, this coalition cannot be united because of intra-class antagonism, as a result of which the sources of forces of the anti-Soviet coalition will be narrowed. Nevertheless, the war against the USSR, emphasized the same Amiragov, "will turn into a whole system of revolutionary, national liberation wars", the outcome of which will be decided on the fronts of the USSR. "It will be a war," he wrote, "where our enemy will have no

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how many external fronts of a big war and a continuous front of civil war in the rear, inside the country"?

The irreconcilable class character of the war presupposed decisive and fierce forms of its conduct. Noting this, Frunze, in his report at a meeting of the Military Scientific Society, said back in 1925: "This will not be a clash over trifles that can find a quick solution. No, it will be a war of two different socio-political and economic systems that exclude each other"?? . And if so, then it will not be a struggle to the stomach, but to the death, it will be a struggle to the end, until the victory of one side or the other.

Military theorists believed that in all cases it was the Soviet Union that would win. This indisputable confidence was based on the fact that it alone is a state with an advanced social, state and economic system, enjoying the support of the working people of the whole world. The report of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of the KhUP stated to the Party Congress: "There can hardly be any doubt that the second war against the USSR will lead to the complete defeat of the attackers, to a revolution in a number of countries in Europe and Asia and to the defeat of the bourgeois landowner governments of these countries"? . Confidence in victory was based primarily on the growing power of the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces, as well as on the moral support of the working people of all countries, allegedly "vitaly interested in maintaining peace." It was noted that in the event of an attack by the imperialist powers on the USSR, a revolution would break out in them, and in the course of their offensive, Soviet troops would meet with the support of the workers and peasants of these countries. Subsequent events showed that the confidence in the victory of the USSR was not speculative, but the calculations for a world revolution turned out to be naive.

On the eve of the war, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the government of the USSR were not able to completely get rid of their former illusions. At the same time, they began to show greater caution in order not to allow the country to be drawn into a war on two fronts, and most importantly, against a coalition of leading powers. To this end, the leadership of the Soviet Union maneuvered in every possible way, trying to use the differences between other states. No ethical standards were taken into account, blackmail and deceit were often used, and all this was motivated by the interests of protecting the Soviet Union.

The strategy of flexible maneuvering was reflected in the agreements signed by the USSR: with France and Czechoslovakia on mutual assistance in 1935, with China in 1937, in attempts to conclude an agreement with France and Great Britain on the eve of World War II, and finally , in the non-aggression treaty signed with Germany on August 23, 1939 and secret protocols to it on the delimitation of spheres of influence, as well as in the neutrality treaty with Japan in 1941. All this was a sharp turn in the foreign policy and strategic course of the USSR. To some extent, this, voluntarily or involuntarily, entered into the conditions for unleashing the second

World War, although, of course, it was based on deeper causes.

War was inevitable, and Hitler's decision to attack Poland was predetermined even earlier. At the same time, it must be admitted that, to a large extent, the actions of the USSR government were forced. On the one hand, they overturned the plans to create a single anti-Soviet coalition, and on the other hand, they allowed the Soviet leadership to gain time to strengthen the country's defense.

The strategic nature of the war

In an equally complex struggle, views were formed on the strategic nature of a possible war. The fact is that from the experience of past wars the most

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various conclusions, which, of course, could not but be reflected in the views on what the new war would be like.

Already in the 1920s, two opposing points of view took shape and clashed. One of them was represented by A. I. Verkhovsky, A. A. Svechin, N. A. Morozov, N. E. Kakurin, M. A. Batorsky and some other military theorists. It was based on the assertion that in technical equipment the Red Army could not be compared with the armies of the leading capitalist powers. Therefore, it must proceed from those methods of struggle where it is possible to fully use its advantages in huge human resources and moral potential. Former lieutenant colonel Batorsky, in 1921 chief of staff of the Western Front, wrote, for example, that "the relative wealth of equipment, especially in a class war, is not as important as the appropriate training of the command and troops and their moral superiority" " .

A prominent representative of the old school was the prominent military theorist and historian Svechin, in those years a teacher at the Academy of the General Staff of the Red Army.

In his major works "Strategy", "The Evolution of Military Art", "History of Military Art", etc., he gave a brilliant overview of the development of military strategy, substantiated its most important principles, formulated the foundations for the development and implementation of political, strategic, economic and diplomatic plans for the war. And yet, in assessing the prospects, he proceeded from a simplified scheme, did not discern the new trends that had already emerged. He concentrated his attention on two main strategic concepts of a possible war: the strategy of crushing and the strategy of exhaustion. He himself, in principle, preferred the strategy of crushing, since the strategy of exhaustion, in his own words, led "to the expenditure of much more money than a short crushing blow to the heart of the enemy"? Nevertheless, taking into account the objective possibilities of the Red Army, he believed that in a future war it would have to adhere mainly to this particular strategy.

Of course, there were some grounds for such conclusions in the 1920s. But they did not correspond to the general trends in the development of military affairs, and most importantly, they contradicted the goals and plans of the Soviet leadership. The other direction was represented by the younger generation of military specialists, as well as some of the military leaders who came to the fore during the civil war. The most far-sighted among them were Frunze, Tukhachevsky, Triandafillov and others. Their views were based on the assumption that the upcoming war would be based on the widespread use of the latest military equipment, would be a war of multi-million mechanized armies, and therefore would inevitably take the most resolute and active forms.

Among those who fiercely criticized the ideas of Svechin and his supporters of the strategy of starvation, Tukhachevsky stood out in particular. At a public review of the work "Strategy", held in 1931 at the Communist Academy, he called Svechin "an agent of imperialism's intervention", and his work was "defeatist" in relation to the USSR®. He was echoed by Golubev, who declared that Svechin's theory of starvation was "essentially harmful to the Red Army"? And M.R. Galaktionov in his article "The Tasks of Bolshevik Criticism on the Military Scientific Front" noted that "the full-scale offensive of socialism along the entire front is at the same time the offensive of Marxist-Leninist theory on all sectors of the theoretical front"? . Further, without burdening himself with evidence, he classified Svechin's views as "harmful" and spoke out against the mechanical opposition of the strategy of crushing and exhaustion, since, in his opinion, in the era of imperialist wars and proletarian revolutions there will be a struggle conflicting tendencies - crush

body blow and struggle for attrition? .

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In the meantime, the persecution that had begun was gaining momentum. The views of not only Svechin, but also Verkhovsky, Morozov and other theoreticians were subjected to indiscriminate defamation. So B. M. Feldman in his book "On the Characteristics of New Trends in Military Affairs", published in 1931, emphasized that "the tendencies of rejecting the strategy of crushing and replacing it with the philosophy of war on starvation"?®. He argued that the theory of war of starvation has a certain basis only in the capitalist countries.

It should be borne in mind that a new theory of strategy, primarily a system of views on a future war, was formed not only in the clash of different points of view within the country, but also in the struggle against military theories born abroad. Moreover, it should be noted that at first this was treated quite tolerantly: the works of a number of Western military theorists were not only translated into Russian, but also published. However, in the West, too, there was complete discord on the question of a future war.

The German general E. Ludendorff and the Englishman James, for example, proceeded from the fact that in a war with the Soviet Union the principles of military operations that had developed during the First World War could be justified. Another British general, V. Lefebure, in his book "The Decisive Offensive Importance of New Combat Means"

He argued that a war that would take on a decisive character would be waged with the widespread use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, tanks and aircraft. The Italian General E. Bastico substantiated the maneuverable nature of the future war, not excluding, however, the emergence of positional forms of struggle." He was supported by the French General F. Kuhlmann. In his Strategy, he wrote about the possibility of conducting both maneuvering and positional operations, but at the same time emphasized that the war could not be long.

In contrast, some military theorists predicted a protracted future war. This, in particular, was substantiated in his work "Modern Development of Ways (Methods) of War" by the French General Requin. General D. Fuller, H. Seeckt, B. Liddell Hart, on the contrary, exaggerated the role of ground troops in the war, especially mechanized, small, professional armies. In turn, the Italian general D. Duet was a supporter of air warfare by an "independent air army", which must first gain air supremacy and then strike at the enemy's ground forces in order to break his moral and material resistance. ??

It must be admitted that in the midst of all this mosaic of highly contradictory attitudes, the Soviet military strategy retained its national independence, and its further development also followed an independent path.

Already in the 1920s, Soviet military theoreticians proceeded from the premise that the coming war would basically be comprehensive, protracted, and extremely intense. During its course, military operations will acquire an exceptionally active, predominantly offensive and mainly maneuverable character. It will be a war of technology, a war of motors, but at the same time the greatest competition of the moral and fighting qualities of warriors.

These propositions were formulated in concentrated form by Frunze. In the article "Front and Rear in the War of the Future," he wrote: "The experience of the war has shown that the achievement of the goals of war in modern conditions has become much more difficult than before ... Even the complete defeat of the enemy's armies, achieved at a certain moment, does not yet ensure final victory, since the defeated units have behind them an economically and morally strong rear. Given the time and space available to ensure a new mobilization of the human and material resources necessary to restore the combat capability of the army,

the latter may

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it is easy to recreate the front and, with the hope of success, carry on a further struggle... In the clash of first-class opponents, a solution cannot be achieved with a single blow. The war will take on the character of a long and fierce competition, putting to the test all the economic and political foundations of the belligerents. In the language of strategy, this means a transition from a strategy of lightning-fast, decisive strikes to a strategy of attrition"?3.

True, Tukhachevsky initially denied the possibility of predicting a war in the long term. In his pamphlet Questions of Modern Strategy, published in 1926, he argued that "it is impossible to answer the question of what character the whole future war will have, because as it develops, war changes its forms, its character and predicts them in advance. it is forbidden". He further wrote: "We can predict, foresee the forms of a future war only for its first period, on the basis of the nature of the development of the armed forces, the preparation and militarization of the industry of the countries entering the war, etc. We can, on the basis of a constant study of these basic factors to draw a conclusion, to give an approximate photograph of the nature of the first period of the war. But there is no doubt that the forms of war in its future periods will, developing and flowing from each other, change. And yet he comes to this conclusion: "The main feature of modern wars is the grandiose scope both in terms of the economic means that are used in war, and in terms of the human resources that feed it, and in the space occupied by the belligerents, and, Finally, in terms of duration.

I. I. Vatsetis, B. M. Shaposhnikov, A. M. Zaionchkovsky, A. I. Kork, A. M. Volpe, A. N. Lapchinsky, and others paid great attention to elucidating the strategic nature of the future war. Despite individual disagreements, they all proceeded from the fact that the future war would become a world war, acquire an enormous scope and be characterized by a number of new features both in terms of the number of human masses participating in it, space and duration, and in terms of economic means that feed war. They were convinced that multimillion-strong armies equipped with the most modern weapons and military equipment would fight. Military operations will cover vast territories on land, at sea and in the air. The whole people, the whole country will fight, the whole state organism will experience the greatest tension. Therefore, the whole country must be prepared in advance for war in economic, military and moral terms.

In his On the Military Doctrine of the Future, published in 1923, Vatsetis wrote that new military technology (aircraft, submarines, radio) had liberated traditional strategy and pushed the boundaries of theaters of war to infinite limits. As a result, the armies of European states, with the exception of Russia, will not have a rear, since "the theater of air war will cover the entire territory of Western Europe and its waters" 35. Zayonchkovsky came to a similar conclusion, who believed that the war of the future would become a , covering vast spaces, "uncompromising in the nature of actions." Shaposhnikov also wrote about the need to prepare for "prolonged and intense tension in a future war." A number of other theorists and practitioners of military affairs adhered to the same point of view.

The provision on the all-embracing nature of the future war was enshrined in a resolution of the 3rd Congress of Soviets of the USSR. It emphasized that modern warfare is waged not only by the armed forces, but by the entire country as a whole, requiring the tension of all productive forces. Under these conditions, the preparation of the state for defense requires not only the education of broad sections of the population in military terms, but also such a development of industry and agriculture, which, without disturbing "the normal growth of productive forces, would at the same time create a solid basis for

needs of defense” 38. This provision was also appropriately reflected in the decisions of the UG Congress of the Comintern in 1928. but at the same time a war that will engulf the masses of millions and the majority of the population of the belligerent countries. The boundaries between front and rear will become more and more blurred.

These assessments of the strategic nature of the future war were decisive in the country's preparations for it. It was concluded that in order to carry it out, it would be necessary to transfer not only the defense industry, but the entire national economy, to a military footing.

Soviet military-strategic thought considered its offensive orientation to be another characteristic feature of the strategic image of a future war. It was assumed that the actions of both the aggressor and the side repelling his attack would be based primarily on active offensive operations. First of all, this requirement applied to the Red Army, which followed from the basic principles of the Bolshevik foreign policy, especially in the military sphere. The report of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of the KhUP to the Party Congress stated: “Our foreign policy is clear. It is a policy of maintaining peace and strengthening trade relations with all countries. The USSR does not think of threatening anyone, much less attacking anyone. We stand for peace and uphold the cause of peace. But we are not afraid of threats and are ready to strike back at the blow of the warmongers. Whoever wants peace and seeks business ties with us will always find support from us. And those who try to attack our country will receive a crushing rebuff. And even earlier, at the XV Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, it was directly stated that we “do not want a single inch of foreign land. But we will not give our land, not a single inch of our land to anyone.

The offensive nature of the Soviet military strategy also followed from the foregoing. This was reflected both in the strategic plan and in the requirements of the relevant statutory documents. Thus, in the Provisional Field Regulations of the Red Army (1936) it was noted: “Any attack on the socialist state of workers and peasants will be repelled with all the might of the armed forces of the Soviet Union, with the transfer of hostilities to the territory of the enemy. The combat operations of the Red Army will be conducted for destruction. Achieving a decisive victory and the complete crushing of the enemy is the main goal in the war imposed on the Soviet Union.

Even more clearly the offensive nature of the strategy is reflected in the draft Field Manual of 1939: “The defense of our Motherland is active defense. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will respond to any attack by the enemy with a crushing blow, with all the might of its Armed Forces... If the enemy imposes war on us, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army will be the most attacking of all the attacking armies ever. We will wage war offensively, with the most resolute goal of completely defeating the enemy on his own territory.

Proceeding from this, the army and navy were tasked with educating soldiers in a spirit of activity, preparing them to defend the gains of the revolution through energetic, resolute and boldly conducted operations. The offensiveness of the strategy corresponded to political goals and the nature of the armed struggle using new combat means.

The situation was more complicated with the question of whether the future war would take maneuverable or positional forms. Various opinions have been expressed on this matter. Frunze and Vatsetis proved the possibility of both maneuverable and positional forms of warfare, but with the former predominant. "None of the most maneuverable

Views on the nature of a future war 201

war,” Frunze wrote, “never goes without elements of positionalism.” In contrast, Kakurin believed that the entire experience of trench warfare could only have historical significance. Even earlier, in 1923, Tukhachevsky expressed the same point of view: “Our future military clashes ... will be of a maneuverable nature, that is, decisive and overwhelming” *.

Nevertheless, the majority of military theorists and military leaders proceeded from the fact that maneuverable and positional forms of combat would have to be organically combined. Thus, Volpe in his work “Front Strike” emphasized: “There is no sharp insurmountable line between positional and maneuver warfare. Warfare can be either more maneuverable or more positional. No guarantee can be given that in a future war it will be possible to completely avoid positional forms, periods, sectors, etc.”*7. Tukhachevsky came to a similar conclusion in 1937. Analyzing the new Field Manual of the Red Army, he pointed out that “in a future war, positional fronts are quite possible; if the means of modern defense are underestimated, if offensive means of struggle are not created in the necessary sizes, and if the troops are not sufficiently trained in the complex art of modern offensive combat.

A special place in the system of Soviet strategic views regarding the nature of a future war was occupied by attitudes concerning its material basis, and, consequently, the methods of waging it. Detailing the trends in the development of military affairs, Soviet military-theoretical thought came to the conclusion that the coming war would be a war of the most diverse military equipment, but above all a war of engines. In its successful conduct, the main role will belong primarily to the skillful mass use of new technical means, especially tanks, artillery and aviation. Frunze came to such conclusions as early as 1925. Even then he declared: “We must have an army armed with the latest technology, an army that in this respect will be on an equal footing, if not higher, with the army of any bourgeois state. . We must remember that in the coming military trials we will have a force against us that is much more serious than the opponents of the era of civil war. The technique of Kolchak, Denikin, Wrangel, the technique of the White Poles is only a faint hint of what our enemies will put against us in the future. We must oppose this force

own power. But in the 1920s, due to the technical backwardness and devastation in the national economy caused by the First World War and the Civil War, the Soviet military industry could not provide the army and navy with modern weapons, because technically they were far behind the armed forces. leading powers of the world. That is why in the USSR it was envisaged to counter the technically stronger enemy with maneuverability, night and guerrilla operations, and in addition, to widely carry out the political decomposition of his troops.

It was possible to equip the army and navy with the latest military equipment in the 1930s on the basis of the industrialization of the country, carried out in the course of the implementation of the five-year plans for the development of the national economy of the USSR. As a result, there was a radical change in views on the nature and entire strategy of warfare. True, this process was strongly influenced by the repressions against the leadership of the Red Army. The ideas expressed by Tukhachevsky and other "enemies of the people" were either hushed up or presented under a different authorship. Only on January 13, 1941, Stalin, speaking at a meeting of the Main Military Council, was forced to admit that the time had come to "peck out the experience of the civil war" and adopt new experience. He further stated: "Modern warfare will be a war of motors. Motors on the ground, motors in the air, motors on the water and under the water. Under these conditions, the winner will be the one who has more engines and more power reserve"?.

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Attaching great importance to equipping the Armed Forces with military equipment, the Soviet military strategy, however, did not fetishize it and did not oppose it to man. It was believed that the impact of new weapons and military equipment on military affairs is carried out not by itself, but through the personnel of the troops who use these weapons. In this matter, military strategy clearly proceeded from Lenin's proposition that, for all the enormous significance of new weapons, "without an enterprising, conscious soldier and sailor, success in modern warfare is impossible." In other words, new military equipment is absolutely useless if there are no people capable of using the latest achievements of scientific thought with knowledge of the matter.

The Disappointing Lessons of the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-1940 showed, however, that not only in the construction and training of the Armed Forces, but also in the development of military art, including in strategy, everything is far from favorable: between theoretical ideas about the nature of war and reality, threatening break. Many weaknesses have been exposed in the organizational structure of the Armed Forces, their technical equipment and combat readiness. People's Commissariat of Defense could not cope with solution of many pressing issues.

After discussing the results of this war at the March (1940) plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and checking the People's Commissariat of Defense, Voroshilov was removed from his post. In May 1940, S. K. Timoshenko was appointed the new people's commissar of defense. At the same time, active measures were developed and began to be taken to eliminate the accumulated shortcomings. Unfortunately, in the conditions of the outbreak of the Second World War, there was no time left for this. But the main thing is that the correct conclusions were not drawn from the experience of military operations of this war, and many of its new phenomena were not noticed and properly assessed.

At a meeting of senior officers and commanders at the end of December, Tymoshenko, who correctly noted major changes in the operational art of the fighting armies, nevertheless stated: "In terms of strategic creativity, the experience of the war in Europe, perhaps, does not give anything new. ... "?". This was an unforgivable delusion, because even then in the West the deepest shifts in the forms and methods of deploying war, its scale, the organization of the strategic deployment of the armed forces, in the conduct of the first and subsequent strategic operations, the control system and etc. True, in the reports of Generals G.K. Zhukov, I.V. Tyulenev, D.G. Unfortunately, due attention was not paid to this by the military-political leadership, and subsequently they did not find an appropriate comprehensive development.

2. Development of the Armed Forces

During the interwar period in the USSR, intensive work was carried out to prepare the Armed Forces, the population and the country as a whole for an inevitable war. This training was based on the accelerated industrialization of the state, the militarization of its economy, and the subordination of all social programs to the goals of defense.

Creation of material and technical base

Already by the beginning of the 1930s, the national economy of the USSR was able to satisfy the minimum needs of the Armed Forces, but the country and the army were not yet ready to wage a major war. When determining a hard course for forsiro

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During industrialization, special emphasis was placed on the development of those branches of heavy industry that were of paramount importance in ensuring the economic independence of the Soviet Union.

The directives of the 15th Party Congress on drawing up the first five-year plan (1929-1933) emphasized: "Considering the possibility of a military attack by the capitalist states on the proletarian state, it is necessary, when developing the five-year plan, to pay maximum attention to the fastest development of those branches of the national economy in general and industry in particular, to which falls the main role in ensuring the defense and economic stability of the country in wartime"?. The development requirements were similar. second five-year plan. In the resolution "On the Second Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy of the USSR for 1933-1937" The 17th Party Congress oriented the working people towards the creation of new

strongholds of industry in the east of the country in such a way that in the event of an attack on the USSR by imperialist states, they would be beyond the reach of their aviation.

During the years of the so-called "Stalin's five-year plans" at the cost of the incredible efforts of the people, the economic potential of the state has increased dramatically. A radical reconstruction of industry was carried out, a number of new industries of great defense importance were created, including tractor, automobile, aviation, chemical, etc. At the same time, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, machine building, fuel and energy base formed

A particularly sharp jump in increasing the pace of industrial production was outlined during the years of the third five-year plan, interrupted, however, by the outbreak of war. In 1940, 18.3 million tons of steel and 14.9 million tons of pig iron were smelted in the country, 165.9 million tons of coal and 31.1 million tons of oil were mined, and 48.3 billion kWh were produced. /h of electricity. The gross output of all industry in 1940 increased in comparison with 1913 by 7.7 times, and the production of means of production by 13.4 times.

The military industry developed the fastest. New aviation, artillery and tank factories were built, and old enterprises for the production of weapons and ammunition were reconstructed. In the Urals, in Siberia, in the Volga region and in the Far East, powerful strongholds of the defense industry were created. In terms of growth rates of gross output, it was significantly ahead of other industries. Thus, in the course of the Third Five-Year Plan, the annual increase in the output of the entire industry averaged 13%, and that of the defense industry, 39%. If in 1939 the output of all industry increased by 16%, then the output of the defense industry increased by 46.5%. Its enterprises were primarily supplied with raw materials, equipment, fuel, and electricity. For 3.5 years of the third five-year plan, investments in the defense industry accounted for more than a quarter of all capital investments in industry. The best scientists, designers, engineers, technicians and workers worked in the defense industry.

With the outbreak of World War II, extraordinary measures were taken to develop the defense industry. They provided for a sharp expansion of military production, primarily for the production of new types of aircraft, tanks, anti-tank guns, and means of communication. In 1940 and the beginning of 1941, the construction of 9 new and 9 old aircraft plants was launched, and the production of aircraft engines began at 7 plants. Kharkov, Chelyabinsk, Stalingrad, Saratov and other factories were involved in increasing the production of tanks. Increased mobilization reserves of strategic materials and raw materials were created in the country.

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But all this was yet to come. And in the 1920s, the country emerged from the civil war in a state of complete economic ruin. All branches of the national economy were in decline. In 1920, the output of heavy industry compared with 1913 fell by 7 times. Most of the factories and factories did not work due to lack of fuel and raw materials. Rail transport was disorganized. There were enough difficulties of a political and social nature. Under these conditions, it was necessary to carry out the transfer of the Armed Forces from martial law to peace. Moreover, it was necessary to switch to such a construction system of the Red Army, which would not be very burdensome for the state, but at the same time would provide military training for the entire male population and guarantee the country's security.

In December 1920, the US All-Russian Congress of Soviets decided to reduce the army from 5.3 million to 3.3 million by January 15 next year. At the same time, the RVSR Field Headquarters developed an appropriate plan, the meaning of which was to "preserve a powerful field army by reducing the rear and the entire service element, as well as internal service troops"?3. However, the famine that began in the country made its own adjustments to this plan. As a result, by the end of 1921, the size of the army decreased to 1.6 million people, and in October 1922 - to 796.9 thousand. In subsequent years, a further reduction in the army took place. Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR Unshlikht noted in December 1925: "The difficult financial situation of the USSR in connection with the poor harvest of 1924, at the same time the need for a qualitative improvement in the army, forced the reduction of the Armed Forces from 610 thousand to 562 thousand. "?.

Since the second half of the 1920s, the size of the Armed Forces of the USSR has been steadily increasing again. This was due both to the fear of a military threat to the USSR from the capitalist states, and to the remaining hopes for a world revolution. So, if on | In October 1927, the strength of the Armed Forces amounted to 610.3 thousand people, then in 1935 - 930 thousand, in 1938 - 1.5 million, and in the middle of 1941 - more than 5 million people*®.

Along with this, the recruitment system, organizational and staffing structure, command and control, combat and operational training were improved. As early as March 1921, the 10th Congress of the RCP(b) established that "for the next period, the basis of our armed forces should be the current Red Army, reduced as much as possible due to older ages, with an increased proletarian and communist composition." The congress allowed for a partial transition to militia formations, moreover, in those areas where the proletarian population predominates, primarily in Moscow, Petrograd and the Urals. However, this transition was carried out slowly. In June 1921, the first militia brigade was created in Petrograd, and ONLY in January-February 1923, 10 personnel divisions were transferred to the territorial militia position. Their more rapid formation began after the publication on August 8, 1923 of the decree of the Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars of the USSR "On the organization of territorial military units and the conduct of military training of workers." In 1925, there were already 46 rifle and | cavalry territorial division?®.

The mixed system (personnel and militia) of army construction made it possible to reduce the cost of maintaining it and the number of rifle units, but at the same time increase the number of technical and special units. At the same time, conditions were created for the training of a contingent of conscripts without a long break

war from production, maintaining a significant number of connections with their control apparatus and the main command cadres. They served as the core for deploying the army in case of war. At the end of the 1920s, the share of territorial connections was 60%. So, in 1928, the Red Army had 81 rifle and cavalry divisions, of which only 38 were personnel. However, as experience has shown,

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Territorial troops did not have a high level of combat training, their deployment did not correspond to the country's defense plan, there was a lack of permanent personnel, and the variable composition was not able to master complex military equipment in a short time. Therefore, already from the beginning of the 1930s, in the construction of the Armed Forces, there was a systematic transition to a personnel system for recruiting the army. By the end of 1935, already 77% of the divisions had become personnel. The transfer of the Armed Forces to a personnel position was legally completed by the adoption by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR | September 1939 Law on universal conscription.

A radical reorganization, and more than once, affected the command and control bodies of the Armed Forces. By the end of the civil war, the central military apparatus was a rather cumbersome structure, numbering 11,000 employees, and in addition, 9,000 Red Army soldiers and workers were allocated to serve them". The field headquarters of the RVSR, the All-Russian General Staff and other central bodies often duplicated each other, which affected the quality of leadership of the Armed Forces. The Central Committee of the RCP(b) in January 1921, based on the proposals of prominent military leaders Vatsetis, Kamenev, Tukhachevsky and others, adopted a resolution "On the strengthening of the Red Army", providing for the reorganization and reduction of the central military apparatus. In accordance with this resolution, the RVSR issued | February, an order to reorganize the Field Headquarters and the All-Glavstab into a single Headquarters of the Red Army, through the Commander-in-Chief directly subordinate to the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs? As a result, it was possible to halve the total number of departments and departments, to a certain extent eliminate parallelism in their work, and clarify the functions of various bodies. In April, the Registration Directorate of the RVSR and the intelligence unit of the Operational Directorate of the Headquarters of the Red Army were abolished, and the Intelligence Directorate was created instead.

In subsequent years, the structure of the central military apparatus was repeatedly subjected to clarifications, and by the end of 1923 its number was 4,407 people. In the same year, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic was transformed into the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR, and the People's Commissariats for Military and Naval Affairs, in order to further centralize the control of the Armed Forces, were merged into the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs.

However, despite the measures taken, there were still enough shortcomings in the activities of the military command and control bodies. They made themselves felt in the autumn of 1923, when the international situation in Europe became more complicated and a number of defense tasks had to be urgently solved. In October an uprising of workers, prepared by the Comintern, broke out in Hamburg. The governments of a number of Western European countries, including France, declared that if a proletarian revolution took place in Germany, they would subject it to a blockade and even intervention. The pro-Bolshevik government set up in Hamburg, which had previously been very resolute, hesitated, especially since the promised support of other cities in Germany and the Soviet Union did not follow. The uprising was quickly put down. "As you remember," Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR Frunze said on April 18, 1924, speaking at the Military Academy of the Red Army, "this situation was then regarded very seriously. The threat of war came close to Western Europe, and the Red Army had to be ready at any moment to enter the battlefield. Proceeding from this perspective, the Red Army carried out the corresponding work." However, the experience of this work, according to Frunze, showed "our poor preparedness for resolving a serious military problem."

A special commission formed by the Central Control Commission of the RCP(b), headed first by V. V. Kuibyshev and then by S. I. Gusev (Ya. D. Drabkin), in March 1924 submitted a report to the Central Committee of the RCP(b) on military inspection results

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department. The Plenum of the Central Committee in its resolution stated "the presence of serious shortcomings in the army (colossal turnover, complete unsatisfactory organization of the supply business, etc.), threatening the army with collapse." Frunze had a slightly different opinion than the commission. "Most of all the shortcomings that have come to light," he declared in April, "are connected with the general situation of our state. They run up against the fact of insufficient financial allocations, run up against our economic poverty, etc. energy, would be able to radically change the situation - it is not necessary. It can only be about some improvements, but by no means about a complete and radical change in the situation" "5.

Members of the special commission proposed to simplify the administrative apparatus as much as possible, eliminate parallelism and bureaucracy, delimit functions between various bodies, adapt the organization of peacetime to the organization of wartime, improve the qualifications of employees, and reduce staff. The Central Committee of the RCP(b) and the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR approved these proposals and set the deadline for the transition to the new organization from April 15, 1924.

In accordance with the developed scheme of reorganization, the post of Commander-in-Chief was abolished, the need for which in peacetime really disappeared. All institutions in charge of supplying the troops with technical equipment were subordinate to the chief of supply of the Red Army. The headquarters of the Red Army was divided into three independent bodies: the administrative headquarters - the Directorate (since December 1924 - the Main Directorate) of the Red Army, the headquarters for training troops - the Inspectorate of the Red Army, the operational headquarters - the Headquarters of the Red Army. However, already in September it became clear that the Headquarters of the Red Army "is overloaded with paperwork on many petty issues that require great attention and therefore make it difficult to concentrate on the main work"6'. Failed to demarcate and functions

between the Inspectorate and the Headquarters of the Red Army. Therefore, according to the report of the Deputy Chief of the Staff of the Red Army Tukhachevsky, the Inspectorate of the Red Army is disbanded in September-October, and as part of the Headquarters of the Red Army, inspections of the armed forces are created, the Combat Training Department is abolished, issues of staffing and military mobilization from the Headquarters of the Red Army are transferred to the Main Directorate of the Red Army .

In 1925, another reorganization of the central military apparatus was carried out. By that time, the struggle for power between Stalin and Trotsky had reached its climax. The fact that Trotsky lost it was evidenced by the latter's dismissal from the post of Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR and People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs. He was replaced in these posts by Frunze, after whose death in October 1925 Voroshilov, who, like his predecessors, did not have a military education, became chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR and People's Commissar of the Navy.

In 1925, a special commission headed by S.A. Pugachev, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Red Army, developed new proposals for the reorganization of the central departments of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs, which received approval from the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR in October. The head office was reduced to 3,598 people. The inspectorate of the Red Army was again separated into an independent body, a single encryption department of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the Administration of the RVS of the USSR were created. But a year later, in connection with the "austerity regime" campaign, the question of reducing and reorganizing the administrative apparatus was again raised. In July 1926, the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR approved the corresponding proposals of the commission, which this time was led by Unshlikht, deputy chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council. "An essential point of the new organization of the central apparatus, which is still in force with minor amendments at the present time," noted in the "Brief Historical Information on the Organization

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of the Central Military Directorate of the Red Army, compiled in June 1928, is the most complete unification of the issues of the country's defense in the Headquarters of the Red Army, and administration - in the Main Directorate of the Red Army. The inspectorate of the Red Army was again disbanded, the inspectorates of the military branches, together with the Directorate of Military Educational Institutions, were subordinated to the Main Directorate of the Red Army, and the Military Topographic Directorate was transferred to it from the Headquarters of the Red Army.

Works published during the Soviet period noted that the reform of the central military administration "played a huge role in strengthening the Armed Forces of the country, in strengthening the defense capability of the USSR." In reality, things were quite different. The lack of a clear idea among the top military leaders about the place and role of the central authorities, not to mention their repeated reorganization (either merging or, on the contrary, disaggregation), never contributed to the successful work of these bodies. The frequent change of leadership of the "brain of the army" - the Headquarters of the Red Army, did not bring any benefit either. Until April 1924, it was headed by the former general 11. P. Lebedev, then until February 1925 by the former volunteer M. V. Frunze,

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who was replaced by former Colonel S. S. Kamenev, in November of the same year, former lieutenant M. N. Tukhachevsky became Chief of Staff of the Red Army, in May 1928 - former Colonel B. M. Shaposhnikov and in June 1931] - Former Colonel A. I. Egorov, who led the Headquarters (General Staff until May [1937). All of them had rich combat experience, but due to their short tenure (except for Yegorov) they could not finish what you started

In 1928, Shaposhnikov proposed a new reorganization, which was carried out in January 1930. All issues of mobilization, recruitment and training of reserve commanders were transferred to the Headquarters of the Red Army from the Main Directorate of the Red Army. In 1933-1934. under the leadership of Yegorov, work on refining the structure of the central office continued. As a result, mobilization issues were again transferred to the Main Directorate of the Red Army, and the Intelligence Directorate was withdrawn from the Headquarters of the Red Army with its reassignment directly to the People's Commissariat of Defense. In June 1934, the USSR Central Executive Committee abolished the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR, and renamed the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs into the People's Commissariat of Defense (NPO). Instead of the Revolutionary Military Council under the People's Commissar of Defense, a Military Council of an advisory nature was created. Transformed in 1938 into the Main Council of the Red Army, it began to function as the former Revolutionary Military Council. Soon, the Military Council under the People's Commissar of the Navy was reorganized into the Main Military Council of the Navy. Back in September 1935, the Headquarters of the Red Army was transformed into the General Staff (GSh) of the Red Army, from which the combat training department was removed, deployed into the corresponding independent department.

In 1937-1939. the activity of the central military apparatus was actually paralyzed; in the course of the fight against the “enemies of the people”, the Chief of the General Staff Egorov, his deputies V.N. Levichev and S.A. The reception of Timoshenko's People's Commissariat of Defense from Voroshilov noted such significant shortcomings in the activities of the central bodies of military control, such as the lack of mobilization and operational plans, a plan for the preparation and replenishment of the reserve command staff for the full mobilization of the army in wartime, data on the state of covering the borders, it was indicated that the launch - the rate of accounting for personnel, etc.” To eliminate the identified shortcomings, appropriate measures were planned, but in the year remaining before the start of the Great Patriotic War, it was not possible to put them into practice.

One of the most important measures to improve command and control of troops was the introduction of unity of command, which partially existed during the Civil War. On July 28, 1924, the Central Committee of the RCP (b) adopted a resolution on the transition

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to unity. In accordance with it, the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR at the end of the year developed and approved instructions on its practical implementation, and on March 2 issued an order on the introduction of unity of command in the army. By 1928, the single commanders were: among corps commanders - 84%, divisions - 74%, regiments - 48% and unit commanders - 42%. political leadership, they were also responsible for the political and moral state of units and formations. In May 1937, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR decided to re-introduce the institute of military - ny commissars, again abolished by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of August 12, 1940 No.

Technical reconstruction of the Armed Forces

A particularly complex and multifaceted task, on the solution of which the combat readiness of the Armed Forces and their strategic capabilities depended, was the rearmament of the army and navy. As already noted, the Red Army ended the civil war with an extremely low level of its technical equipment. This situation continued in the first years after its completion. Horses were the main draft force in the troops, the number of which by the end of 1922 was 159.3 thousand? armored trains, about 300 armored vehicles, up to 80 tanks, almost 300 aircraft". By the mid-20s, the number of weapons and military equipment had slightly increased, mainly due to the repair and restoration of previously faulty systems. In 1927, a new 76- mm regimental cannon, prototypes of the light tank T-18 (MS-1) and armored car BA-27. At the same time, fighters I-2, I-2 bis, reconnaissance R-1, R-5, bombers TB-1 and TB-2. As a result, by the end of 1928, the number of field artillery guns increased to 7,200, and anti-aircraft - up to 590, aircraft - up to | 400 , tanks - up to 92". Nevertheless, in terms of technical equipment, the Red Army continued to lag behind the armies of the advanced capitalist states, which, in the conditions of a sharply aggravated international situation, especially after Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, became extremely dangerous. .

Taking this into account, the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR developed the first five-year plan for the development of the Red Army (1929-1933), which was an integral part of the general five-year plan for the development of the national economy of the country. It envisaged completely re-equipping the army and navy with the latest models of military equipment, creating new technical types of troops (aviation, armored troops) and special troops (chemical, engineering, etc.), increasing their share in the system of the Armed Forces, and in addition to modernize old weapons and military equipment, motorize the infantry, cavalry and artillery, carry out mass training of technical personnel'. In terms of the number of troops, the Red Army was supposed to be not inferior to probable opponents in the main theater of military operations - the Western, and in terms of technology - to be stronger than the enemy in three decisive types of weapons, namely: aircraft, artillery and tanks.

In the next five years (1933-1937), it was planned to complete the technical reconstruction of the Red Army in such a way as to consolidate its superiority over the capitalist armies in all decisive means of struggle. This would allow the USSR to fight against any coalition of capitalist powers, inflict crushing blows on them and even defeat in the event of their attack.

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As a result of the implementation of these plans, starting from 1932, the troops began to receive new systems of weapons and military equipment in increasing numbers. The ground forces received an improved machine gun "Maxim", a modernized three-line rifle by S. I. Mosin of the 1891/30 model, and then new light, anti-aircraft, tank and aviation machine guns. The number of automatic weapons in the army grew rapidly. So, if in October 1928 the troops were equipped with 24,230 easel and 8811 light machine guns, then by the beginning of 1937 there were 60 thousand and about 95 thousand units, respectively.

In 1930, it was possible to complete the modernization of old artillery systems, and from 1931 to 1937. Artillery began to receive 37-mm and 45-mm anti-tank guns, new, and more long-range and faster-firing 122-mm and 152-mm guns, 76-mm anti-aircraft guns, 203-mm howitzers and 82-mm mortars. The total number of guns for 9 years has increased from 8,600 to 30,000, of which 1,672 are anti-aircraft guns. This made it possible to more than double the firepower of infantry and cavalry formations.

Thanks to the rapid development of the tank industry, new armored vehicles were supplied to the troops in increasing numbers: light tanks T-18, T-26, BT-2 and BT-5, medium and heavy tanks T-28 and T-35, tankettes T -27, amphibious tanks T-37 and T-38. Total from 1930 to 1939. 15 thousand tanks were produced, of which about 12 thousand basic samples and | 426 armored vehicles". Their positive quality is high speed, and insufficiently powerful weapons and armor remained a weak point.

Signal troops received more advanced radio stations of the type 6 pc, 5 ak, telephone sets UNA-F-31, TAM, telegraph sets NOTA-34, ST-35, etc. The engineering troops began to receive N2P and NLP crossing fleets, light dressing aids, means of mechanization and electrification of engineering works, inconspicuous wire obstacles, anti-personnel and anti-tank mines.

gradually increased the production of cars and tractors. If in 1928 there were only about 1,200 trucks in the army, by the end of 1935 there were over 35,000 vehicles and almost 6,000 tractors.

The Air Force developed rapidly. By the beginning of the 1930s, more advanced I-5 fighters, TB-2 heavy bombers, R-5 light bombers (aka reconnaissance aircraft), and TSh-2 attack aircraft began to be supplied to them. Even greater successes were achieved during the years of the second military five-year plan. High-speed and maneuverable fighters I-14, I-15, I-15 bis, I-16, Pe-1 and Pe-4, heavy bombers TB-4 and DB:-3, front-line bombers SB and TSh-3 attack aircraft, which exceeded the previous types of aircraft by 1.5-2 times in speed and flight altitude. The ratio of aviation branches has also changed. If in 1928 reconnaissance aircraft prevailed in the Air Force (82%), now the ratio has changed in favor of bombers, attack aircraft and fighters.

Certain successes have been achieved in the field of naval construction. If at the beginning of the 1930s light submarine and surface forces were mainly created, then since 1934 the shipbuilding program was aimed at creating, first of all, large surface forces - battleships, heavy cruisers, superior in their qualities to similar foreign ships. The construction of surface lungs and

powerful submarine forces.

And yet the pace and direction of the technical reconstruction of the Armed Forces did not correspond to the rapidly becoming more complicated conditions of warfare and its nature. This was clearly revealed in 1938 during the fighting near Lake Khasan, in 1939 in the area of the river. Khalkhin Gol, but especially in the Soviet-Finnish war of 1939-1940.

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Combat experience has shown that most types of weapons and military equipment are obsolete. Therefore, immediately before the start of the Great Patriotic War, hasty measures were taken to develop and introduce more modern types of weapons into the troops. Among them are automatic rifles by F. V. Tokarev (SVT-40), a submachine gun by G. S. Shpagin, 76-mm divisional guns, 122-mm divisional howitzers, 85-mm anti-aircraft guns, T-34 medium tanks, KV-1 tanks, Yak-1 and MiG-3 fighters, Il-2 attack aircraft, Pe-2 bombers, RUS-1 and RUS-2 radar stations, anti-aircraft artillery fire control devices (PUAZO-3), pontoon S-19 parks, more advanced anti-personnel and anti-tank mines, RAF and RSB radio stations. In total, in 1939 and the first half of 1941, the Red Army received 105,000 light, heavy, and heavy machine guns, more than 100,000 machine guns, over 7,000 tanks, and 17,745 combat aircraft. At the same time, work began on studying the possibility of carrying out an explosive nuclear reaction, leading to an explosion with the release of enormous energy.

But for the mass production of new types of weapons and equipment and the subsequent rearmament of the army, it took at least two years. In the meantime, the troops had them in limited numbers. So, by the beginning of the war, only [861] a new medium and heavy tank, and the Air Force received 2,739 modern aircraft.” It was not possible to completely eliminate other bottlenecks in the technical equipment of the army and navy, especially in mortars, artillery propulsion, anti-tank weapons, automatic weapons, etc. All this sharply reduced the operational and strategic capabilities of the Armed Forces, and in later was one of the reasons that did not allow them to successfully repel enemy attacks and deploy operations in accordance with the plans.

Organizational development of the Armed Forces

Along with the technical re-equipment of the army and navy, their organizational structure was also improved. Its development was carried out taking into account the increase in strike force, firepower and mobility of troops.

In August 1923, a new staff of the rifle division was adopted. From the brigade organization, she was transferred to the regimental. The division consisted of 3 infantry and [cavalry regiment, 2 artillery battalions, support and maintenance units. At the same time, a hull control link is introduced. By the end of the year, the number of directorates of rifle corps was increased to 17. The following year, the divisions were again reorganized. In accordance with the staff adopted in the fall, an artillery regiment was created instead of two artillery battalions, and a squadron instead of a cavalry regiment.

A more thorough organizational restructuring of the ground forces began in the 1930s. For the first time, a tank battalion was included in a rifle division. The number of machine guns is doubled, and the number of artillery and mortar weapons is increased by 2.7 times. Instead of two corps artillery divisions, two artillery regiments are included in the rifle corps, a separate anti-aircraft artillery battalion and an engineer battalion are introduced.

After the Soviet-Finnish war, the organizational and staffing structure of all military branches was completely revised. In April 1941, rifle formations were gradually transferred to the states, which in wartime were supposed to have three rifle regiments, light artillery and heavy howitzer regiments, anti-tank and anti-aircraft battalions, reconnaissance and engineer battalions, a communications battalion, and others. support and logistics units. From the staff of the division

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the cavalry squadron and the tank battalion were excluded. In total, the division was planned to have 14,483 people, 558 machine guns, 210 guns and mortars, 16 light tanks, [3 armored vehicles, 558 vehicles, 9 tractors and 3,039 horses. A reduced staff was established for peacetime: for border military districts - a division of 10,300 people, for internal districts - 5,850 people. The rifle corps has become more reinforced. It included 2-3 rifle divisions, 2 artillery regiments (72 guns), a separate anti-aircraft battalion, a communications battalion, and an engineer battalion.

The cavalry underwent a significant reorganization. Since 1926, instead of three brigades, a cavalry division began to include two and a machine-gun squadron. Then tank units are included in its composition and the number of guns increases. But at the same time, the total number of cavalry is sharply reduced. So, if by the end of 1937 there were 32 cavalry divisions in the Red Army, then by the beginning of 1941 - only 13, and 8 of them were consolidated into 4 cavalry corps. Most of the cavalry personnel were assigned to the formation of armored troops. According to the state of 1941, the cavalry division included 3 cavalry and 1 tank regiment, horse-artillery and anti-aircraft divisions. The division consisted of about 9 thousand people, 8 thousand horses, 64 tanks and 51 guns. The highest operational-tactical formation was the cavalry corps, which united 2-3 cavalry divisions.

The organizational development of artillery was carried out in the direction of consolidation of its units and formations. Already in the 1930s, the share of divisional artillery decreased from 82% to 64%. At the same time, the composition of corps artillery increased from 12% to 22%. The artillery reserve of the High Command also increased significantly. By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, it included 74 howitzer and cannon regiments. Separate artillery battalions of special power were also formed. Since the beginning of the 1940s, all attention has been focused on the development of anti-tank artillery. In April 1941, the formation of 10 anti-tank artillery brigades of the RGK of two regiments began, but this work could not be completed by the beginning of the war.

The largest and most radical organizational measures were taken in the field of construction and development of armored forces. In the 1920s, for the first time, a brigade of armored trains, an autotank brigade and a squadron of tanks were formed. In 1925, a squadron of tanks was reorganized into a separate tank regiment, armored trains were brought together into regiments, and armored detachments into divisions. In 1930, the first mechanized brigade was formed, which in 1932 was deployed into a mechanized corps, which included 2 mechanized and a rifle and machine gun brigade, a separate anti-aircraft artillery battalion, more than 500 tanks and 200 vehicles" .

In 1938 mechanized brigades and corps were reorganized into tank ones. The tank corps consisted of 2 light tank brigades and a motorized rifle and machine gun brigades, and a separate light tank brigade - from 4 tank and reconnaissance battalions, a heavy tank brigade - from 3 tank and cadre battalions. The armored forces included 4 tank corps, 24 separate light tank and 4 heavy tank brigades*.

Under the influence of an erroneous assessment of the experience of the war in Spain, tank corps were disbanded at the end of 1939 and a transition was made to a single organization of tank formations in the form of RGK tank brigades of 156 combat vehicles. At the same time, a decision was made to replace the mechanized corps with mechanized divisions. However, the outbreak of World War II forced us to reconsider this decision. Taking into account the experience of using in the French campaign ver

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maht of large tank and mechanized formations in the USSR from the middle of 1940 begin to form 9 mechanized corps of 2 tank and 1 motorized division in each. It was assumed that the tank corps would have 1,031 tanks. In February-March 1941, it was decided to form 20 more mechanized corps. This required almost 32,000 tanks, including 16,500 new types. However, there was practically no place to take such a number of cars, and even during the year. Therefore, by June 1941, only 53% of the mechanized formations were completed on average83.

In fact, by the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, there was not a single fully equipped and combat-ready corps in the USSR. They were more like training formations than combat units. This major mistake could have been avoided if the formation of mechanized corps had been carried out consistently, taking into account the production capabilities of industry. At that time it was possible to at least keep the well-knit tank brigades, to have a minimum of combat-ready corps to solve important operational tasks at the beginning of the war.

Since the 1930s, a new type of troops has been deployed in the Red Army - airborne troops. This started when in March 1931 in the Leningrad Military District a non-standard experimental airborne assault detachment was formed, and in June a non-standard paratrooper detachment was formed. The following year, a full-time airborne assault detachment was formed, deployed in 1933 into a special airborne landing brigade, and in 1936, 2 air brigades and 3 special airborne regiments were additionally created. A year later, all airborne units are deployed into 6 airborne brigades. In the spring of 1941, 9 more brigades were formed and 5 airborne corps were created. For the centralized management of them, a special department headed by the commander of the Airborne Forces is created under the NPO of the USSR.

With some delay, the reorganization of the special branches of the armed forces took place. In 1923, the engineering troops, in addition to the units that were part of the divisions, consisted of 43 combat units and subunits - pontoon and electrical battalions, separate searchlight and military camouflage companies, motorized pontoons and other detachments, as well as 6 training units of the central and district offices. In the 1930s, the engineering troops were transferred to a more harmonious organization, but they still remained weak. Only in 1939-1941. their restructuring was carried out in relation to the nature of the operations of a possible war. The technical equipment of the engineering troops has increased, district engineering departments have been created.

and pontoons.

Significant changes have taken place in the communications troops. In the 1920s they were mainly military units and units. Under the central and district subordination were 19 communications regiments, a radio regiment, 2

separate communication battalions, 10 radio battalions, 15 separate radio stations and 12 pigeon communication stations. In the 1930s, separate signal companies and squadrons of divisions and corps were deployed into signal battalions (divisions), and army signal units were created, a standard set of signal units of district and central subordination was defined.

The automobile fleet of the Armed Forces grew rapidly. By the end of 1940, there were about 187,000 motor vehicles and 38,400 tractors in the army and navy. Artillery was gradually transferred to mechanized traction. Large car parts began to be created. By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the Red Army had 19 automobile regiments, 37 separate automobile battalions and 65 automobile depots*.

The railroad troops were reinforced. In 1923, they included 6 departments of separate railway brigades, 22 separate railway battles

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she and 2 indigenous parks. But already in the fall of the next year, separate railway battalions were reorganized into regiments (each with 2 operational and 2 construction battalions). In the 1930s, a special corps (5 railway brigades) was formed as part of the railway troops, intended for the construction and operation of defense railway lines. Subsequently, 8 more separate railway brigades were deployed. Such a composition of the railway troops basically ensured the solution of the priority tasks of covering and restoring the railways.

Profound structural transformations took place during the interwar period in the Air Force. In 1923, the Soviet Air Force consisted of 41 squadrons and several separate aviation units. Since 1929, they formed the same type and mixed aviation brigades, and in 1933 - aviation corps. Finally, from the end of 1936, heavy bomber corps were reduced to special purpose aviation armies (GA), designed to solve independent operational and strategic tasks. However, in 1938, the reverse process began: associations and formations were disaggregated, regiments were created according to the branches of aviation, which were then reduced to aviation brigades.

In 1940, taking into account the experience of military operations in the West, the Air Force was radically restructured. Since that time, their new division has been established: into the aviation of the High Command (long-range bomber), front-line, army and military aviation.

The aviation of the High Command included 5 aviation corps (2 bomber and fighter divisions each), as well as 2 separate divisions. Front-line (Air Forces of military districts) aviation included separate bomber and fighter aviation divisions of a homogeneous composition, and in addition, mixed aviation divisions as part of bomber, fighter and attack aviation regiments, reconnaissance aviation regiments. The army aviation consisted of mixed aviation divisions, and the military aviation consisted of corps aviation squadrons of 16 aircraft each (reconnaissance aircraft, spotters and communications). Regiments of all types of aviation were divided into squadrons (12 aircraft each) with a total strength of 60-64 aircraft. In total, by June 1941, the Air Force had 79 aviation divisions and 5 brigades (long-range bomber aviation - 13 bomber and 5 fighter divisions; air forces of districts and armies - 61 divisions). However, 25 air divisions, mainly district and army, were in the process of formation and re-equipment with new aircraft, and their flight personnel were undergoing retraining."

Air defense troops acquire a new quality. Their deployment began in 1928, when anti-aircraft artillery regiments and VNOS posts began to be created to cover the most important administrative and industrial centers. In 1932, anti-aircraft artillery divisions of air defense were formed to cover Moscow, Leningrad and Baku, and other large cities - air defense brigades and regiments. In 1937, these formations and units were transformed into air defense corps and brigades, respectively. Fighter aviation is included in the air defense corps. At the beginning of 194] the entire territory of the Soviet Union was divided into the Northern, Northwestern, Western, Kiev, Southern, North Caucasian, Transcaucasian, Central Asian, Transbaikal, Far Eastern, Moscow, Orel, and Kharkov air defense zones. The general leadership of the air defense forces is entrusted to the Main Directorate of Air Defense of the Red Army, which is directly subordinated to the people's commissar of defense.

The air defense zone was managed by the assistant commander of the district troops for air defense, who was also the head of the air defense zone at the same time. All air defense systems were subordinate to him, with the exception of fighter aircraft, which remained

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was subordinate to the head of the district air force. Air defense zones were divided into districts, and districts into points. In those cases when the zone included many air defense units scattered over a large territory, air defense brigade areas were created as an intermediate link of command.

The Navy by the end of 1923 consisted of 392 ships of various classes. The following year, destroyer and submarine battalions, minesweeping and barrage detachments are deployed into brigades. In 1932, the Naval Forces of the Far East were created, and in 1933, the Northern Flotilla. In January 1935, the Naval Forces of the Baltic and Black Seas and the Naval Forces of the Far East were renamed into fleets - the Baltic, Black Sea and Pacific, and in May 1937 the Northern Military Flotilla was transformed into the Northern Fleet.

In December 1937, due to the increase in the combat strength of the Navy and the increase in its role in solving operational and strategic tasks, it was separated from the Red Army, and the People's Commissariat of the Navy was formed to manage it. In addition to four fleets, it includes the Caspian, Amur, Danube and Pinsk military flotillas, several naval bases and the Air Force. In total, the Navy by the middle of 1941

consisted of 3 battleships, 7 light cruisers, 54 destroyers and leaders, 212 submarines, 270 torpedo boats, 2,429 aircraft, more than a thousand coastal defense guns*. Another 296 ships of various classes were under construction. However, the fleets lacked minesweepers and auxiliary vessels, air defense systems, landing craft, and only the Baltic Fleet had marines.

On the whole, the entire complex of these organizational and structural reforms, of course, contributed to the strengthening of the domestic Armed Forces. However, many activities could not be completed. In addition, most of them were not only financially unsecured, but also unrelated to each other. In this regard, there were disproportions in the development of various branches of the armed forces. As before, the issues of deploying operational formations remained unresolved. Starting from the summer of 1939, the formation of combined military armies began in the border military districts, each of which was to include several rifle corps, a mechanized corps, an aviation division, and a number of army units. But their coherence remained low, and the set of army units did not fully correspond to their purpose.

In accordance with the new Law on universal conscription, persons were called up to the army and navy who were not 2] years old, as it was before, but 18-19 years old. The term of active service in the army increased from 2 to 3 years, and in the navy - from 3 to 5. This made it possible to have 5,373 thousand people in the Soviet Armed Forces by the beginning of World War II, of which 79.3% were in the Ground Forces, 11.5% - in the Air Force, 5.8% - in the Navy and 3.4% - in the Air Defense Forces.

Training of the Armed Forces

At that time, one of the most important defense tasks was the preparation and accumulation of military-trained contingents for the deployment of the Armed Forces in case of war. The main way to solve it was to serve in the army and navy, where the bulk of those liable for military service were trained. At the same time, the system of non-arms training was also developing. For this purpose, the teaching of military affairs was introduced in secondary schools and technical schools. Corresponding courses were organized in various defense and sports societies, primarily in Osoavizkhim (Society for the Promotion of Defense, Aviation and Chemical Construction),

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founded in 1927. It has trained hundreds of thousands of military specialists, pilots, paratroopers, tankers, signalmen, and others.

Beginning in 1926, pre-conscription training was introduced for students of higher educational institutions and technical schools, for which 180 hours of theoretical classes and 2 months of summer practice in military camps were allotted. Those who graduated from high schools and technical schools and completed their pre-conscription training served in the army for 9 months, and in the navy - | year. After passing the exams, they were dismissed as the middle command staff of the reserve.

In 1930, in most universities and technical schools, pre-conscription training of students was replaced by non-military training, which was considered active military service for them, and training camps in units lasted 3-4 months. After passing the exams, students were enrolled in the reserve as middle commanders, and most of those who graduated from humanitarian universities were trained as reserve police workers. Since the autumn of 1939, non-military training remained only in higher educational institutions, and pre-conscription training was introduced in schools for senior students. In addition, periodic retraining was carried out

as reserve command staff.

In the 1930s, a rather coherent system of operational, mobilization, combat and political training developed in the Armed Forces. Since then, it has been continuously improved. The troops systematically conducted exercises and maneuvers during which various types of combat actions were practiced, the main provisions of combat regulations were checked, and new equipment was tested. Of greatest interest were the maneuvers of the troops of the Kyiv (1935) and Belorussian (1936) military districts.

However, at the end of the 1930s, due to mass repressions against the officers of the army and navy, the established system of combat training began to gradually fall apart. Worst of all, the methodological experience was lost. In the educational process, connivance, simplification, and fraud have become widespread. Classes and exercises, as a rule, were carried out formally, which was soon reflected in the combat training of the troops, and then in combat operations, especially during the Soviet-Finnish war. The situation was somewhat improved with the advent of Tymoshenko to the People's Commissariat of Defense. By significantly raising the demands, he revived the old principle: "to teach the troops what is needed in the war." But time was lost, and the army entered the Great Patriotic War insufficiently trained.

The most vulnerable point in the combat readiness of the Armed Forces after the end of the civil war was the training of command personnel. In most cases, their general educational and professional level was extremely low. Therefore, already at the end of 1921, by decision of the Council of Labor and Defense, measures were taken to expand the network of military educational institutions. On | October 1923, the Military Academy of the Red Army, 78 command courses, higher and normal military schools operated. New curricula and programs were developed for military and general education subjects. In 1924-1925. 16,299 people were released from the walls of military schools." This, however, was clearly not enough to fill the gap that arose after the dismissal of former officers and generals from the army. As a result, by 1925, in the rifle troops, 36% of the senior and 50% of the middle command staff had an education below the normal military school, in the cavalry, 26.7% of the middle and 48% of the senior command staff had no military education at all*?. The situation was no better in other branches of the armed forces.

November 1925, an order appeared to put into effect the "Regulations on the military schools of the Red Army." At the same time, the creation of

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universities. By the end of the 1920s, there were 6 military academies, 5 military faculties at civilian universities, 2 higher military schools for the training of higher and senior command personnel. In order to retrain the middle and part of the senior command staff, advanced courses were opened, and for commanders of the highest management level - in 1925, advanced courses for senior command personnel (KUVNAS) at the Military Academy of the Red Army. At the same time, there were 57 normal military schools with a term of study of 3-4 years, which by the beginning of the 30s had trained about 24 thousand people.

Since the spring of 1925, classes in the system of command training began to be regularly held in the troops. All this made it possible to achieve certain results in the training of command personnel. In the final order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR for the 1928/29 academic year, it was noted that the commander began to make decisions for battle and operation faster, his ability to use technical means of combat increased, and the quality of work of headquarters in the field increased.

An important role in the training of command personnel was played by the directive "The system of operational training of command personnel and staffs" dated January 7, 1935, signed by People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov. The main goal of operational training was to develop solid skills in planning operations, ensuring continuous control and interaction in various conditions of a combat situation, and organizing the uninterrupted work of the rear. In the instructions of the Chief of the General Staff Yegorov of January 6, 1936, the forms and methods of training command personnel and staffs were clearly defined.

The first half of the 1930s was characterized by a further increase in the level of training of military personnel due to the intensive conduct of various types of training. For example, in the summer of 1930 the commanding officers of the Moscow Military District took part in training camps to study new equipment and methods of its application, and in the Leningrad Military District in the summer of 1933 the commanding officers gained skills in organizing and carrying out the introduction of a mechanized corps into a breach³. Command staff of the Volga military district in 1933-1934. He took part in experimental exercises with live firing, where the basic provisions of the theory of deep operation and combat were tested. In the Kiev Military District in March 1936, the commanders and their staffs worked out the organization and conduct of an army offensive operation at the district bilateral operational-strategic military game. In November 1936, People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov noted that the highest command personnel and staffs "grew significantly and basically mastered the theory and practice of operational command of troops" 39

However, in the mid-1930s, mass repressions that fell upon the commanding cadres practically nullified all the work done earlier. In 1940, the proportion of people with a higher military education was more than halved compared to 1936, 70% of commanders and chiefs had an education in the amount of secondary school and short-term courses, and people with combat experience were only 26%! To correct the situation that had arisen, 42 military schools were formed in 1940, the number of students in military academies more than doubled compared to 1937, and cadets almost five times! '. By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War in the USSR, 19 military academies, 10 military faculties at civilian universities, 7 higher naval and 203 military schools, 68 advanced training courses were preparing military personnel, in which more than 300 thousand students and cadets were trained!

Since 1940, the practice of holding military games and command and staff exercises has been resumed. And yet, by the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, it was not possible to completely eliminate all the gaps in the training of command personnel. Many commanders are

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they knew how to organize combat on the ground, control troops in the course of maneuverable defensive and offensive operations, had little knowledge of the organization and tactics of a potential enemy, the procedure for organizing interaction and supporting operations. "A major shortcoming of the programs of military academies is that, - it was noted in the act on the admission of NPOs, - that in these programs little time is devoted to special disciplines, which affects the quality of training. Military academies and military schools are insufficiently provided with new models of weapons. In military academies and military schools, there is a low level of exactingness, and there is an overestimation of grades. The training of students in military academies and cadets in military schools has a number of significant shortcomings, of which the main ones are: a) insufficient knowledge of the material part; 6) lack of practical skills" '03. All this had to be paid in blood with the beginning of the war.

3. Development of the theory of strategic operations

At the turn of the 1930s and 1940s, an extremely complex and tense military-political situation developed in the world, the economic crisis worsened, and the scale of military threats, caused by the aggressive policy of the ruling elite of Germany, Japan and Italy, expanded. Along with this, there was an unprecedented arms race, the rapid growth of the armies of all states, an increase in the arsenal of means of armed struggle that were equipped with them. All this, taken together, forced an active search for an expedient political and military strategy that would make it possible to more fully and reliably guarantee national security, more successfully repel potential aggression, and achieve goals in the upcoming war. Taking into account the established ideas about its nature, the real state and capabilities of our own Armed Forces and at the same time the armies of a potential enemy, it was important first of all to determine how the war would begin, what strategic tasks the Armed Forces would face and how to solve them. Accordingly, such issues as the problem of the initial period of the war, the preparation and conduct of the first and subsequent operations, were put forward first of all.

In the first half of the 1920s, the concept of the initial period of the war was based on the views developed on the basis of the experience of the First World War. In accordance with them, it was believed that this period would cover the time interval from the announcement of war until the completion of the deployment and the beginning of decisive operations of the main forces of the belligerents. At the same time, it was assumed that from the moment war was declared, the adversaries would mobilize, and under the cover of limited hostilities, simultaneously or with some delay in time, they would concentrate and deploy the necessary strategic groupings of their armed forces in the theaters of military operations. It was expected that this period would last at least 10-15 days.

However, it soon became clear that due to the rapid development of aviation and tank forces, the war would most likely begin with a sudden attack by the aggressor, i.e. without its official announcement, and its initial period, unlike the first world war, would be characterized by a fierce struggle on the ground, in the air and at sea for the capture and retention of the strategic initiative. Moreover, even in peacetime, the aggressor will seek to covertly and in a short time to carry out partial mobilization, will try to concentrate in the border areas a significant

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the number of troops (invading armies), the core of which will be tank and motorized formations. With the support of aviation, before general mobilization, they will begin carrying out border offensive operations in order to defeat the border troops, disrupt the mobilization of the main forces, their concentration and strategic deployment.

With all this in mind, the Chief of Staff of the Red Army Tukhachevsky already at the beginning of 1926 defined the most important task of military-theoretical thought to study one "of the most essential issues of our preparation for war - the question of determining the nature of the war ahead of us and its initial period, first of all, of course, at the European theater!" In the same year, in his pamphlet Questions of Modern Military Strategy, he stressed that the old ideas about how to deploy troops and conduct border battles no longer correspond to the capabilities of new combat weapons. In his opinion, the aggressor will try to disrupt the planned mobilization in the areas adjacent to the border, in connection with which the development of the first period of the war is of particular importance! 5.

In the early 1930s, these views became essentially universally recognized. R.P. Eideman, head of the Military Academy named after V.I. M. V. Frunze, in the article "On the Question of the Character of the Initial Period of the War," wrote that the qualitative indicators that distinguish the armies of 1930 from the armies of 1914 will change the military-technical nature of the outset of the war, and "the one whoever does not take this into account will be severely punished." In his opinion, the very first hours of the war would be marked by a fierce air struggle. With the support of aviation, mobile mechanized troops will go on the offensive with the aim of penetrating as deeply as possible into the territory of the enemy. In the meantime, under the cover of invasion troops and air strikes, mobilization will be carried out and the first strategic echelon will be brought into battle. "The struggle for the right to be the first to develop," the author emphasized, "is what, in our opinion, will characterize the outset of a future war" 5.

In turn, the head of the Red Army Air Force Ya. A. Alksnis warned against excessive stretching of the pre-mobilization period in time, so as not to allow a weaker enemy to snatch the initiative from the hands of a stronger one. This period, as he pointed out, is necessary in three cases: when the army is not sufficiently prepared for war and mobilization; when there is no certainty that the conflict will end in war; when both sides are unwilling to take responsibility for declaring war! 7.

At that time, S. I. Ventsov, S. N. Krasilnikov, E. A. Shilovsky, R. S. Tsiffer and others wrote about the initial period of the war, for example, in their article "Characteristics of the upcoming war" noted that the initial period would take time from the start of hostilities to the concentration of forces sufficient for decisive border battles. He considered it important to shorten the duration of the initial period by deploying strong garrisons in the border areas, which, in his opinion, would reduce the number of troops transported during the deployment of the army, as well as through the widespread use of vehicles for its concentration. In any case, the author of the article convinced everyone that the initial period would not be long, and as an argument he cited the following argument: in the event of an attack on the USSR by imperialist countries in their rear, the working people would start a civil war! 8.

The problems of the initial period of the war were deeply analyzed in the General Staff of the Red Army and military academies. In 1932, under the leadership of the Chief of Staff of the Red Army Yegorov, the theses "Tactics and operational art of the Red Army in the early thirties" were developed and then submitted to the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR. They emphasized that "new means of armed struggle (aviation,

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lowered and motorized formations, modernized cavalry, airborne landings, etc.), their qualitative and quantitative growth raises in a new way the questions of the initial period of the war and the nature of modern operations." This document defined the main goals of the invasion groups: a) destruction of parts of the cover; 6) disruption in the border areas of mobilization and new formations; c) capture and destruction of reserves formed by the enemy for waging war and holding areas of operational importance indicated in the mission as one of the main goals of a deep invasion of enemy territory; d) force the enemy to carry the deployment deep to the rear! 8. In solving these problems, the parties, according to Yegorov, will strive to preempt the enemy in deploying the main forces and seizing the strategic initiative.

It was especially emphasized that in the initial period, the main danger will be aviation, which

bomb attacks and landings can interfere with the transport of troops at a depth of 600-800 km. Therefore, "the main guarantee of the possibility of the uninterrupted fulfillment of the concentration plan is the presence of a powerful air fleet, anti-aircraft defense systems ...".¹⁰. Movable connections can be no less dangerous. To neutralize them, the authors of the theses suggested using powerful mechanized groups and cavalry units, appropriately deployed in peacetime. At the same time, Yegorov argued that "invasion groups will only be able to create a series of crises, inflict a series of defeats on the covering armies, but they cannot resolve the issue of ending the war or inflicting a decisive defeat on its main forces. This is the task of the subsequent period of operations, when the operational concentration is over!"¹¹. This conclusion once again proves that tribute to the old was still paid.

Issues related to the initial period of the war began to be worked out in military games, exercises and maneuvers. So, in May 1929, according to the plan of the army two-stage bilateral military game, held under the leadership of the commander of the Moscow Military District I.P. direction. In turn, the "Reds", having gone on the defensive in this direction, concentrated large forces in Belarus, which launched an offensive in the Warsaw direction. Assessing the current situation during the analysis of the game, Uborevich correctly noted: "The Poles have a richer railway network, while ours is poorer and the territory is larger. Therefore, we will be late. It was during the German war, it will be in the coming war too!"¹².

At the same time, it must be taken into account that, in full accordance with the concept of this game, the Blues began their attack on the Reds by declaring war. This is also characteristic of the one-sided military game of the highest command staff of the Red Army Air Force, which took place in October 1931, where the attack on the USSR by the combined forces of the "yellow", "green" and "blue" (meaning Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and France) was practiced. - tion). According to the terms of the game, on the fourth day after the declaration of war, the "Reds" deployed in the Dniester region and repulsed all attempts of the conditional enemy to cross the river!¹³.

Subsequent studies have shown the fallacy of such attitudes. The publication of a number of theoretical works allowed a deeper understanding of the essence and content of the initial period of the war, the features of the operations and hostilities carried out during that period. A significant contribution to the solution of these problems was made by both domestic military scientists and military leaders, and foreign military leaders.

The German General H. Seeckt, in his article "Thoughts of a Soldier", argued that the future war would begin with a surprise attack by the air forces and a small, well-armed professional people's army (covering army or operational

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army)!¹⁴. His views were shared by some French generals, including F. Kulman and Chalea, and the English General B. Liddell Hart. The majority of Western military theorists proceeded from the fact that this would be a war of mass armies and that it would begin with major decisive operations of all branches of the armed forces.

A similar method of action in the West was practiced mainly during operational exercises. So, in 1933, a war game was held in Poland, during which an invasion of the territory of the Soviet Union was practiced under the pretext of providing cover for the deployed armed forces!¹⁵. In 1934-1936 in Germany, Poland, Italy and France, the actions of invading armies were also practiced with their breakthrough into enemy territory in order to destroy the covering troops. The possibility of raids by motorized mechanized formations with the support of cavalry behind enemy lines to disrupt mobilization and concentrate its main forces was studied. Methods of delivering massive air strikes on important political, administrative, military centers and objects were explored!¹⁶. The main emphasis was placed on the surprise of the attack and the rapid capture of the strategic initiative.

The Soviet top military leadership had a different opinion, namely: the possibility and inevitability of more decisive and large-scale actions during this period. However, the majority of domestic military theorists shared this point of view. Thus, Shilovsky in his article "The initial period of the war" wrote in 1933: "Even with a superficial review of the current political situation and the state of military equipment (especially the development of aviation and mechanized troops), it is clear that the initial period of a future war will differ sharply from that in 1914. It will be completely different, both in its content and in the forms of military operations. In certain cases, it may not even exist in the former understanding, as a clearly limited period of time: on the one hand, it may dissolve into long-term preparatory measures, and on the other, it may imperceptibly pass into the conduct of operations!

As for the nature of hostilities at the beginning of the war, Shilovsky, unlike foreign authors, believed that instead of actions by relatively small groups in a narrow border strip, as was the case in the initial period of the First World War, in a future war a fierce struggle would unfold from the very first hours. over a large space. At the same time, aviation and mechanized troops can shock the enemy so strongly that the result of their actions will decisively affect the course of subsequent operations and, possibly, even the outcome of the entire war. and the Armed Forces to a war that would make it possible from the very beginning to conduct offensive operations with decisive goals.

Tukhachevsky expressed himself even more definitely on this score in his work "The Nature of Border Operations". He concluded that the actions of the covering army would result in a fierce frontier battle on a large scale, which had previously been considered the prerogative of the main forces. In connection with this, the troops of the first strategic echelon, called upon to wage this battle, Tukhachevsky called not a covering army, but a forward army. "The frontier battle," he wrote, "will be fought not by the main forces of the army, as was the case in previous wars, but by special units, a special advanced army stationed in the border zone!"¹⁸. The core of the forward army, by

in his opinion, should be mechanized and cavalry formations, kept in wartime states and deployed 50-70 km from the border, as well as aviation formations located 120-200 km from the border.

On the day of the declaration of war and the beginning of the general mobilization, the advanced army, as he believed, would enter the battle, the content of which would be: air strikes on

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enemy airfields and landing sites in a zone 150-200 km deep; actions of airborne assault forces in a zone up to 250 km deep to disrupt the enemy's mobilization, undermine his railways and highways, isolate his garrisons and destroy troops; attack aircraft raids on the enemy's railway network in order to completely disrupt his strategic concentration; destruction of the enemy in a zone up to 250 km deep by the joint efforts of aviation, airborne troops, mechanized troops, cavalry and rifle troops in vehicles. In the event of a successful border battle, in the author's opinion, the possibility will open up for an unimpeded solution of the problem of strategic concentration and deployment of the main forces with the extensive use of railways. At the same time, troops can move to the border itself, and some units will land even on enemy territory.

At the same time, Tukhachevsky allowed active actions on the part of the enemy. He warned of the possibility, in the first hours of the war, of enemy airborne landings in the rear of the Soviet troops, as well as penetration deep into individual groups of his tanks. In this regard, he emphasized the need for proper training and readiness of his troops, but the main thing he insisted on was that the enemy should not be underestimated. "We should not console ourselves with the fact that our potential adversaries are slowly reorganizing in a new way," warned Tukhachevsky. - The enemy can reorganize suddenly and unexpectedly. It is better to warn the enemies yourself. It is better to make fewer mistakes than to learn from mistakes!

Along with military theorists, politicians, who had a very vague idea of military science, also tried to solve the problems of the initial period of the war. Thus, in 1932, the Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern noted, in his opinion, a qualitatively new phenomenon in the process of preparing for war, unleashing it and waging it - the so-called "crawling into war." This has been taken up by some military theorists. "The new term "crawling into war," noted Shilovsky, "implies covert methods of preparing for war and the actual start of hostilities without an official declaration of war in order to mask, hide from the masses the moment of the outbreak of a new imperialist world war"! 20. At the same time, the concentration and deployment of the invading army, as well as the mobilization of the main forces, will be carried out gradually, disguised by various pretexts, such as gatherings, maneuvers, exercises, etc.

A detailed analysis of the military-political and military-strategic factors conditioned by the birth of this new phenomenon was made by V. A. Melikov and S. N. Krasilnikov. The latter, in particular, wrote that the characteristic features of "crawling" are the intertwining of the state of "war" and "non-war", the presence of diplomatic and trade relations and negotiations between countries that are actually mobilizing and partially concentrating forces against each other. In this regard, he considered "crawling into the war" only as a transitional stage "towards general mobilization and concentration, their first act under new conditions"21.

According to Krasilnikov, the use of such a method of action is caused by the desire of the aggressor:

a) to rouse the people to war not by means of simultaneous mobilization, but gradually, in separate groups, in order to "cover over" the beginning of the war;

6) obtain the greatest possible freedom of maneuver in foreign policy in conditions of internal political instability, use the penultimate argument of diplomacy - pressure by concentrating military forces without declaring mobilization and war,

c) mobilize industry before the start of mobilization of the army and prepare for war in the form of emergency appropriations;

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d) to collect and fully train the minimum number of forces necessary for preliminary operations before the outbreak of war and the announcement of mobilization, thereby eliminating the need to carry out concentration under the influence of modern aviation and other means at the start of hostilities!"??.

Military scientists and practitioners attached particular importance to frustrating the enemy's plans in the initial period of the war. The highest vigilance, activity and determination were considered the main condition for this. Everyone unanimously emphasized that passivity, waiting can lead to deplorable results. "The worst thing in modern conditions," wrote Eideman, "is the desire to adhere to the tactics of waiting in the initial period of the war. Such tactics, in the presence of an active adversary who has prepared his air fleet and mobile ground forces for active operations already in the initial period of the war, will lead to the fact that the defending aircraft, being forced to disperse its efforts throughout the entire space of the defended territory, will inevitably will suffer heavy losses in this struggle and, in the final analysis, will enter the decisive phase of the war, rather exhausted and morally depressed!

On the basis of theoretical studies, the General Staff in 1934 developed the draft "Instructions on the operation of the invasion." In it, the initial period of the war was defined as a period of struggle for the strategic deployment of the armed forces. The troops (groups) of the invasion were assigned the tasks defined in the theses "Tactics and operational art of the Red Army in the early thirties." The main provisions of the draft "Manuals for the operation of the invasion" were checked by the highest command personnel of the Belarusian and Volga military districts

during a field trip that took place in May 1935. It was headed by Yegorov, Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. The topic of the field trip is "Actions in the initial period of the war in conditions when the enemy preempts deployment"². Based on its results, the following conclusion was drawn: the covering troops must maintain their strength even at the cost of a partial loss of their territory.

At the beginning of January 1936, the directives of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Voroshilov and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army Egorov were issued, in accordance with which 1936 was declared the year of working out the problems of the initial period against the operational background of a future war. At the September maneuvers of the troops of the Kyiv Military District, one of the stages was directly devoted to this problem. In accordance with the deliberately created situation, the mock enemy, as before, had advantages in deploying and invading the territory of the USSR. But unlike the game of 1935, the "Reds", having reinforced the covering troops with rifle, cavalry and mechanized formations, managed to stop the advance of the enemy and, under the threat of encirclement, forced him to retreat to their territory!².

The following year, a military-strategic game was held at the General Staff under the leadership of Yegorov on the theme "The initial period of the war in the Western theater of war". According to the situation, the aviation of the "blue" (Germany and Poland were meant) without declaring war attacked railway junctions, airfields and areas where the "red" invasion groups were concentrated. In response to this, the "Reds" crossed the border, concentrating their main efforts on the southwestern strategic direction. However, the game showed that the main forces of the Red Army were late in concentration by 10 days, and the "blues" thus got the opportunity to defeat them piecemeal.

In subsequent years, during exercises and maneuvers, the development of different actions was no longer allowed. The only and decisive was the variant according to which the Red Army from the first days of the war inflicted defeat on the enemy, drove him back from the border and conducted an offensive on enemy territory. At the same time, the people's commissar

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Defense Voroshilov demanded that all the tasks of working out the initial period of the war be built "on an abstract situation that is not politically close to the conditions of today"! ².

In general, the official view of the initial period of the war at the end of the 30s was as follows:

1. Modern wars are not declared, but start suddenly, treacherously. Therefore, already in peacetime, powerful armed forces must be created, which are in constant combat readiness.
2. The war will start with large forces, but not the main ones. At this time, the main forces will complete their mobilization, continue their concentration and strategic deployment under the cover of the first echelon.
3. Troops of the border military districts (covering armies), mobilized in advance, deployed and put on high alert, must deliver an immediate retaliatory strike. At the same time, a general mobilization will begin to create a second strategic echelon of the main forces of the Red Army.
4. During the initial period, the armies of the border districts, relying on the actions of aviation, armored and mechanized troops, will repel the enemy attack and transfer the fight to his territory. At the same time, the mobilization, concentration and deployment of the main forces are being completed, which, relying on the successful actions of the troops of the covering armies, will begin their operations in much more favorable conditions than was possible with previous views on the conduct of the initial period of the war.

However, these attitudes in many respects no longer corresponded to the changed conditions for unleashing the war. This was clearly revealed during the German attack on Poland, and then during the defeat of France. In both cases, Germany struck with its main forces secretly mobilized and deployed. It cannot be said that this circumstance remained unnoticed in the USSR. "The German-Polish war began with the very fact of Germany's armed invasion on the ground and in the air," wrote Isserson, lecturer at the Military Academy of the General Staff. "It began immediately, without the usual preliminary stages for the practice of past wars"

². In essence, this was the main strategic surprise for the Poles, since the military leaders of Poland did not even think that Germany would attack them with all the necessary, in advance and secretly mobilized forces.

New phenomena in the content of the initial period were also noted by Krasilnikov in his work "Offensive Army Operation", published at the Academy of the General Staff in 1940. He wrote: "The initial period of the war is not now the preparatory stage of the war, since the prewar a more or less long period, in which all or part of the activities that previously constituted the content of the initial period of the war can be carried out ... The initial period directly and gradually develops into the period of main operations, and the line between these periods is erased"! ² 8.

The sudden German attack on Poland was discussed in December 1940 at a meeting of the top leadership of the Red Army. It noted the suddenness of the attack, the decisive role of aviation and tank troops in waging a mobile war and inflicting powerful retaliatory strikes on the enemy at its very beginning. At the same time, it was believed that a surprise attack by previously mobilized forces was possible only in a war with a small state. For an attack on the Soviet Union, the enemy will need a certain amount of time to mobilize, concentrate and deploy the main forces. Both sides were expected to fight

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actions by only a part of the forces, but for the deployment of the main forces of the Red Army, as well as the main forces

At this meeting, Lieutenant General P. S. Klenov, Chief of Staff of the Baltic Special Military District, sharply criticized Isserson, the author of the book *New Forms of Struggle*, for his assessment of the experience of the German-Polish war, especially with regard to that "there will be no initial period of the war", but it will begin with the invasion of ready forces. "I consider such a conclusion to be premature," Klenov said. "It can be allowed for a state like Poland, which, conceited, lost all vigilance and which had no intelligence of what the Germans were doing during the months of concentration of troops" '?. Alas, life itself refuted such a presumptuous conclusion of the general.

In January 1941, the General Staff of the Red Army held two operational-strategic games in order to give the high command an opportunity to practice planning and organizing front-line and army offensive operations, but, unfortunately, operations of the initial period of the war were completely excluded from the draw in both games.

In his memoirs, Marshal of the Soviet Union Zhukov noted: "A major gap in Soviet military science was that we did not draw practical conclusions from the experience of the battles of the initial period of World War II in the West"! "5. And then he wrote: "During the revision of operational plans in the spring of 1941, the peculiarities of waging a modern war in its initial period were practically not fully taken into account. The People's Commissar for Defense and the General Staff believed that the war between such major powers as Germany and the Soviet Union should begin according to the previously existing scheme: the main forces enter the battle a few days after the border battles. Fascist Germany was placed on the same terms with us as regards the terms of concentration and deployment. In fact, both the forces and the conditions were far from being equal!

Views on the strategic offensive

The official assessment of the nature of the future war as a revolutionary-class war oriented the Soviet military strategy towards the most resolute actions to achieve military-political goals. Therefore, in the 1930s and 1940s, the development of methods for conducting a strategic offensive was of priority importance in the works of domestic military theorists. The same provisions were enshrined in all the governing documents. In the Provisional Field Manual of 1925, for example, it was noted: "By defending, you can only weaken the enemy, but not destroy him. The destruction of its combat units is achieved only through the offensive"!??.

True, there were also supporters of more economical methods of action, especially on a strategic scale. So, the commander of the Siberian military district NN Petin, speaking at | At the All-Russian Congress of Commanders and Political Staff with a report "Maneuver as the main stimulus of strategy and tactics", he stated: "The task of war is to defeat the enemy, but in what way. Not by massacre, slaughter, but by psychological influence on the masses, instilling in them the idea of the futility and aimlessness of further resistance and the need to submit to the will of the enemy. This can most likely be achieved within the framework of strategy and tactics by a maneuver that produces a stunning, all-destroying impression with its lightning strikes, if the latter are applied unexpectedly to the most vulnerable points of the enemy location.

However, this point of view was not supported. Thus, in the "Manual on conducting operations" (1924) it was emphasized: "The task of each operation and battle is

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destruction of the armed forces of the enemy and his technical means of struggle. This position was firmly held by the majority, but Tukhachevsky defended this demand most actively. Criticizing the views of Petin, he wrote in his work "Questions of the High Command": "Operations are carried out to destroy the enemy's manpower, which is necessary to achieve the goals of the war. The most profitable destruction is achieved by capturing the enemy, since in addition to weakening the enemy army, prisoners economically strengthen the rear of the victor. If capture is difficult or fails, the operation must achieve annihilation by the physical extermination of the enemy. Commanders of all levels must be educated on activity, ingenuity, on a resolute striving to destroy the enemy's army. According to Tukhachevsky, after the destruction of the armed forces, an unhindered road opens up to occupy the main industrial areas of the enemy, victory over the latter automatically transfers the entire territory defended by the enemy into the hands of the winner, which is the basic rule.

One of the important issues was to determine the methods of conducting strategic operations. Analyzing the experience of the First World War and the Civil War in Russia, Russian military-theoretical thought came to the conclusion that in a big war, due to the high survivability of armies, one blow, one offensive operation, even if it is gigantic in scale, is not enough to defeat the enemy. Therefore, a series of offensive operations carried out on a broad front and in great depth is necessary. Substantiating this proposition, Kamenev in his work "Immediate Military Tasks" emphasized: "In the war of modern large armies, for the actual defeat of the enemy, a sum of continuous and planned victories on the entire front of the struggle is needed, successively complementing one another and interconnected in time. Only with the help of such a chain of victories can one expect to crush the will of the enemy, not allowing him to use the living and material means at his disposal to restore the destroyed areas!

An assessment of the nature of a future war as a long, protracted war predetermined the need to divide it into periods, campaigns and strategic operations, to determine the nature and scale of those tasks that could be solved on the way to the final goal of the war. However, there were no clear definitions of the concepts "war period", "war stage", "campaign", "strategic operation" in the 1920s and even in the 1930s, which led to their different interpretations.

Tukhachevsky, for example, understood a campaign as "a series of operations united by one common idea and built on continuous action!" Campaigns, in his opinion, could either characterize a whole period of the war, or part of it, or coincide with a number of successive operations. Svechin understood a campaign as "several operations united by time and place"....! , and a series of successive operations is the most essential and decisive part of the campaign, although the latter may contain a few very inconsistent operations!. In the Great Soviet Encyclopedia for 1937, a campaign was defined as "a set of military operations connected by a common plan and constituting, in time and place, a certain segment of one or another war. And then it was noted: "The war in most cases consists of campaigns, and the individual theaters in which they are deployed are taken into account."

Even more difficult was the establishment of an expedient sequence of actions of the Armed Forces and the distribution of their efforts. Everyone agreed that even after a full strategic deployment, the Armed Forces could not

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conduct a strategic offensive simultaneously in all theaters of military operations against the armed forces of several states that were part of a hostile coalition. Therefore, it was envisaged to defeat them by carrying out a successive strategic offensive, i.e., large-scale operations in various theaters of military operations, starting with the main one.

"... Waging war against a coalition," wrote Tukhachevsky, "one must be able to draw up a plan for the elimination of not the entire coalition at once, but in parts, consistently and systematically. The ability to assess the situation in this way, break it down into its component parts, notice the significance of one, another, third member of this coalition and correctly draw up a plan for their successive liquidation until an advantageous correlation of forces overwhelming in our favor is created, all this is the main difficulty and at the same time the basis of the art of modern strategy. Struggle under our conditions must break up into a whole series of periods of war.

It was believed that in order to defeat the enemy in the main theater of military operations, the Western one, it was necessary to deploy two fronts, and on the others, one front consisting of 3-4 armies and 1-2 cavalry corps on each (up to 50 divisions in total).

Gradually, views on the nature and methods of conducting strategic offensive operations were formed and refined. The experience of the First World War and the Civil War in Russia showed that the depth of a strategic offensive has its definite limit, since the advancing troops inevitably weaken due to losses in battles and sick people, and also due to the fact that they are forced to leave part of the forces to consolidate the territory occupied by the enemy, to stretch their communications and use reserves. Therefore, one of the most important problems of military-theoretical thought was the problem of theoretically calculating the depth of a strategic offensive in a war. It was covered most thoroughly by Svechin in Strategy, Tukhachevsky in Questions of the High Command, and Triandafillov in The Nature of Modern Operations.

Svechin noted that since a strategic offensive requires a significant expenditure of forces, a continuous influx of fresh forces is a prerequisite for a long offensive, and otherwise even the most skillful strategic offensive leads to disaster. "The politician, in establishing the ultimate political goal of a war, must carefully listen to the advice of the strategist, since the ultimate military goal will definitely follow from the political goal," he wrote. - An offensive that has passed its climax very quickly takes on the character of an adventure, and any further development of it is only the most perfect preparation for the enemy's transition from the pursuit of negative goals to the pursuit of positive goals, which can get the greatest scope ... Hence It is clear how important it is to assess in time the limit beyond which an offensive turns into a gamble and begins to turn into preparations for an enemy counterattack... the point at which he can reap the harvest of his successes."? Svechin insisted that, as soon as the moment comes for the troops to lose tactical advantages, the strategy should reconsider the question of the expediency of continuing the operation and end it at the appropriate line, sometimes, perhaps even with the abandonment of part of the occupied territory.

In the 1920s, due to the almost complete absence of vehicles, the supply of all means of material supply to the troops fell on railways and horse-drawn transport. Therefore, it was believed that the fronts were able to advance without stopping within a month to a depth of 350 to 400 km. However, to such a depth could not

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attack by the same grouping, if only because the front of the offensive changed, and most importantly, the enemy was able to make an attempt either to slip away from the blow or to bring up new forces. As a result, to defeat it at one stage or another of the strategic offensive, it might be necessary to create a new grouping of forces and assets.

With this in mind, when developing methods for conducting a strategic offensive, much attention was paid to building up the efforts of troops and conducting successive front-line offensive operations. "In our Western conditions," Tukhachevsky wrote on this occasion, "a series of successive operations is our final means for destroying enemy armies ... Our Red Army ... must be one hundred percent ready to carry out continuous operations. This is the basis of our

strategic success, this is for us the key to economical warfare. He believed that rapidly developing successive operations might not give the enemy the opportunity to regroup, and he would be pressed to the last line in a grouping unfavorable to himself.

It was assumed that in the course of a continuous offensive to a depth of 350-400 km, the fronts would carry out 2-3 operations, after which they would be forced to suspend the offensive for a certain time in order to establish communications and tighten up the rear. A continuous frontal offensive to a depth of more than 350-400 km was considered possible only when in the first collision (initial operation) the main enemy grouping succeeded in inflicting a decisive defeat, and the surviving forces during the withdrawal did not have time to destroy railways and bridges, and also in the event that a revolution breaks out behind enemy lines."

Based on a generalization of the experience of the First World War and the Civil War, it was concluded that a strategic offensive should be carried out on a broad front. It was noted, in particular, that one of the main reasons for the failure of most of the offensives carried out by the opposing sides during the positional period of the First World War was that they were undertaken on a narrow front - 30-40, maximum - 80 km. As a result of this, the defenders had the opportunity to repel the blow of the attackers, to bring into battle not only their reserve divisions, but also divisions withdrawn from passive sectors of the front. In order to deprive the enemy of this opportunity, it was recommended to carry out a strategic offensive in such a way that during the first strike the advancing troops would cover at least half, and at least one third, of the defending forces. Triandafillov, for example, believed that for a successful offensive by a front deployed over a 400-kilometer area, active operations must be carried out in a zone of at least 150-200 km!®.

A strategic offensive carried out on such a scale in the theater of operations naturally led to the conclusion that it was necessary to organize a strategic operation of a group of fronts. However, most military theorists understood it as only a major front-line operation. In contrast to them, Svechin called it a "gigantic operation", and Tukhachevsky called it a "decisive operation."

In general, in the field of strategy, many fundamental questions were not worked out in sufficient detail in the 1930s. As a result, for most of the problems there was too much diversity of opinion. And this is no coincidence. As early as 1925, at the direction of Frunze, Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR, the cycle of lectures on strategy at the Military Academy of the Red Army was shortened, while the time for studying tactics was increased. Since 1929, strategy has been transformed from a purely practical subject into a military educational subject with the aim of giving listeners a unified point of view "on the whole of military affairs, instilling a correct understanding of the fundamentals of warfare and the theory of operational art"!%. In the orders of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR for the 1924/1925 academic year, questions

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strategies were practically not touched upon, and all attention was concentrated on mastering the basics of preparing and conducting combat and operations on an operational scale. This situation continued in the future. Moreover, in 1930, the People's Commissar of the Navy Voroshilov did not support the proposal of Shaposhnikov, Chief of Staff of the Red Army, to continue carrying out large-scale maneuvers, referring to the fact that "maneuvers are expensive, and often we cannot do them"!7. In fact, this was the result of Stalin's tacit ban on intrusion into the strategic area, which he considered his monopoly. That is why the development of many strategic problems turned out to be unacceptably neglected.

Taking into account the experience of strategic leadership in the civil war, one of the most important conditions for the successful conduct of a strategic offensive was considered to be a skillful choice of the direction of the main attack, combined with a decisive massing of forces and means. The main blow was to be delivered against the enemy's main grouping, if possible at its most vulnerable point. Tukhachevsky wrote that "under normal conditions, when choosing the direction of the main attack, one must proceed from considerations of a strategic order, i.e., from the conditions for reaching the flank and rear of the main enemy grouping with the aim of encircling and destroying it"! 48.

The massing of forces and means in the direction of the main attack was thought to be carried out by boldly withdrawing them from the secondary directions of the front. It was believed that in an oncoming battle in the direction of the main attack, it is necessary to have a 1.5-2-fold superiority, when breaking through a hastily occupied enemy defense - 3-fold superiority, when breaking through a prepared defense - 5-66-fold superiority, and the density of artillery, respectively - 25- 30, 40-50 and 60-80 guns on | km of the breakthrough front. Moreover, the duration of the artillery preparation was allowed 3-5 hours.

Methods and forms of conducting a strategic offensive were chosen depending on the outline of the front line, the nature of the defense, the grouping of enemy troops, and other factors. In the collective work "Army Operation" four forms of conducting a front-line operation were outlined. The first is a frontal blow, usually delivered by the forces of two armies, with the aim of breaking through the enemy defenses and rapidly developing success in depth. The second form is a concentric attack (two flank attacks in converging directions), usually by two or three armies, reinforced by cavalry formations, with the aim of encircling and defeating the main enemy forces. The third form is a flank attack by forces of at least two armies with the aim of enveloping or bypassing the main enemy grouping, pressing it against a natural line, and then defeating it. The fourth form is a frontal strike on a wide front with the expectation of crushing the enemy's front and crushing him along

parts.

Regardless of the method and form of conducting an offensive, a demand was put forward to supplement the main strike with a number of energetic strikes on auxiliary axes in order, firstly, to deprive the enemy of the possibility of maneuvering forces to repel the offensive of the main grouping of troops, and also to mislead him regarding the intentions coming.

The encirclement of the main enemy forces was considered the most effective form of a strategic offensive. However, it was taken into account that in maneuver warfare, the encirclement and destruction of large groupings is a very difficult matter. That is why this form of operation was recommended to be used only in the presence of a significant superiority in forces, and, mainly, in the case of an offensive by two fronts.

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Analyzing the method of approach to determining the forms of operations, Svechin wrote that they "are not chosen by us arbitrarily, but are dictated by the balance of forces and means ... the power of various main routes, the configuration of the theater of operations and its most important lines. The form of the operation must be chosen in such a way that it puts our troops in an advantageous tactical position... At the same time, the form of the operation must be as simple as possible. Any addition of combat and maneuvering layers to an operation is unacceptable, not only because it extremely complicates questions of command and control: any extra maneuver, any battle that is not inevitably necessary to achieve the goal of the operation, is fraught with the greatest danger of diverting us from the goal to a false path... The shape of the operation, in terms of its chasing, clarity and harmony of its lines, should remind us not of the curlicues of rococo, but of the strict rectilinearity of the outlines of a Greek temple»!¹⁰⁰.

Since the mid-1930s, much attention has been paid to correct calculation and ensuring high rates of troop offensives, especially at the beginning of an operation. It was assumed that under typical conditions, in a meeting engagement with the enemy or in breaking through his hastily occupied defenses, the average daily rate of advance of rifle troops should be 10–12 km per day, in breaking through a prepared defense, 5–6 km, and in operations in its operational depth is 15-20 km!

At the same time, it was believed that even the most brilliant breakthrough could not be of decisive importance if it did not immediately develop into a relentless pursuit of the enemy. For this, it is necessary that the main strike force act compactly, and its offensive be carried out rapidly and be of a maneuverable nature. It was envisaged that parallel pursuit combined with the advance of part of the forces from the front would give the greatest success. The main strike grouping of the front must, by its resolute and swift actions, not give the enemy the opportunity to withdraw in an organized manner, regroup and take up defense on a new line.

The change in the nature of a future war in connection with the rapid growth of technical means of combat forced a new approach to the study of the problem of breaking through the enemy's strategic front. In the theses of the Headquarters of the Red Army "Tactics and operational art of the Red Army of the early thirties" it was noted that new means of combat (aviation, artillery of the RGK, tanks) make it possible to "hit the enemy simultaneously at the entire depth of his location, in contrast to the current forms of combat and attacks that can be characterized as successive suppression of individual divisions of the battle order"!?. Based on these estimates, the theory of deep operation was developed. It was based on the simultaneous suppression of enemy defenses to the full depth by artillery and aviation, a rapid breakthrough and the development of tactical success into operational success through the use of powerful mobile formations and airborne assault forces.

According to the theory of a deep operation, it was planned to break through the enemy's strategic front in two stages. At the first stage, it was supposed to suppress the defense to the entire tactical depth with powerful air and artillery strikes, and then break through it with a non-stop offensive by infantry and tanks. The second stage included the introduction of mobile troops into the breakthrough - mechanized and cavalry formations, the landing of air and sea assault forces, the development of a breakthrough in depth, the transformation of a tactical success into an operational one, the completion of the defeat of the enemy with the capture of his most important economic regions, airfields and supply bases.

The indispensable conditions for the successful conduct of a deep operation were considered to be the gaining of air supremacy, an offensive on a broad front with a decisive massing of forces and means in the direction of the main attack, and the isolation of the area on

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advances of a strike force from enemy reserves by delivering air strikes against them and landing airborne assault forces, as well as preventing the delivery of materiel to its attacked troops.

In the second half of the 1930s, the theory of a deep operation was tested and concretized at maneuvers and military games in the Byelorussian, Kiev and other military districts, as well as at a military-strategic game held by the General Staff of the Red Army in 1936. Unfortunately, in the future in view of the repressions that fell upon its authors, they tried to forget about it. She received her recognition only in the 40s. In December 1940, at a meeting of the highest command and political staff of the Red Army, General of the Army Zhukov made a report "The nature of the modern offensive operation." In particular, it said: "In the conditions of our Western theater of operations, it seems to me that a major offensive operation with a strategic goal should be carried out on a wide front, at least on a scale of 400-450 km"!?. To carry out such an operation, he considered it necessary to concentrate 85-100 rifle divisions, 4-5 mechanized and 2-3 cavalry corps, 30-35 air divisions. In principle, these propositions developed the ideas of Eideman, Tukhachevsky, and Triandafillov, which they expressed as early as the 1930s.

At the same time, based on the experience of local conflicts and the outbreak of World War II, Zhukov listed a number of new requirements for an offensive. "A modern offensive operation," he noted, "can count on success only if the strike is delivered in several decisive directions, to the entire depth of the operational formation, with the deployment of large mobile forces on the flank and rear of the main enemy grouping. Simultaneously with offensive and auxiliary strikes on decisive axes, the enemy must be demoralized on the widest possible front. Only such

an offensive operation can in a relatively short time lead to the encirclement and defeat of the bulk of the enemy forces on the entire front of the offensive being undertaken"154

Both Zhukov and Timoshenko, who summed up the results of the meeting, analyzed in detail and on most issues from new positions the nature and methods of conducting modern front-line operations in the main — Western — theater of military operations. In their opinion, a modern operation is most fully deployed on a front-line scale, and the front is an operational-strategic organization. Achievement of the ultimate goal of a war or campaign was envisaged to be carried out through a series of intermediate front-line operations. The width of the front offensive zone was determined at 890–300 km, the depth was 60–250 km, and the rate of advance was 10–15 km or more per day155.

Timoshenko singled out three forms of operational breakthrough, which, according to him, should be considered as the main type of offensive operation. The first form is a single strike by the concentrated forces of several shock armies on a relatively narrow section of the front (890-100 km) with the task of making a breach, and then deploying it widely, which will allow large cavalry-mechanized formations to pass behind enemy lines and the rapid development of success in depth. and on the flanks. The second form assumed the offensive of several shock armies along a wide front (200-250 km) with the expectation of defeating the entire grouping of the opposing enemy, and in addition to pinning down his reserves. The third form provided for the delivery of several interconnected strikes in a common zone 350–450 km wide, the formation of separate army breakthroughs in several directions, the fragmentation of the enemy's front, the encirclement and defeat of his individual groupings in parts.

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According to Timoshenko's calculations, 50-100 guns and 50-100 tanks per 1 km of the front should have been deployed in the strike directions. When delivering a strike by concentrated forces in a narrow sector, the operational formation of front troops should be composed of 2 operational echelons, 1-2 mobile and aviation groups, and special-purpose reserves. It was planned to include 4-7 armies in the first operational echelon, and in the second - | combined arms army. In the mobile group of the front, it was recommended to have a mechanized and cavalry corps or 1-2 mechanized corps, in the aviation group - front-line aviation and airborne assault forces. In the event that the front inflicts several interconnected blows, it is more expedient to create a second echelon and a mobile group only in the armies advancing in the direction of the main blow.

In the first echelon, it was planned to deploy shock and restraining armies. The shock army was intended for an offensive in the main direction. It could have 14-18 rifle divisions (4-5 rifle corps), 10-12 artillery regiments of the High Command reserve, 6-8 separate tank brigades, 2-3 aviation divisions, mechanized or cavalry corps. The pinning army was intended to cover the flanks, pin down the enemy and defeat his forces in secondary directions.

The offensive operation of the front was supposed to be carried out in two stages: at the first, to crush the defense of the opposing enemy to its entire operational depth (100-120 in; on the second, to complete its defeat and create conditions for conducting a new front offensive operation. It was planned to begin with powerful artillery and aviation training lasting from 1.5 to 2 hours.The offensive of rifle troops and tanks of direct infantry support must be accompanied by artillery fire and massive air strikes.At the same time, depending on the nature of the enemy's defense and the completeness of intelligence on the location of his The preparation of an attack could be carried out with a barrage of fire to a depth of up to 2 km, successive concentration of fire on the most important defense objects, or a combination of these types of fire.

The mobile front group was recommended to be used in two versions. In the event that the tactical defense zone of the enemy is well equipped in terms of engineering and is also densely occupied by his troops, it is very

it is expedient to introduce this group into the breakthrough after the rifle corps. If the enemy does not have the necessary forces to create a solid defense on the second lane, it is better to bring mobile groups into the gap immediately after the rifle corps overcome its main lane. When entering the gap, the group was planned to be built in several echelons: a special one - an airborne assault; the first is bomber aviation; the second - parts of heavy tanks; the third - parts of medium and light tanks; fourth - motorized infantry; the fifth is artillery; sixth - rifle troops.

The task of the mobile groups was to rapidly advance into the depth of the enemy's defense, destroy his suitable reserves, prevent them from creating a new front, enter the retreat route of the main enemy grouping and, with the support of aviation, encircle it in cooperation with the airborne troops. Moreover, the hastily occupied defensive lines had to be broken through on the move, without waiting for the approach of rifle troops and also with the support of aviation. The development of tactical success into an operational one had to be carried out not only by mobile groups, but also by the main forces of the front. An operational breakthrough was considered complete when the main enemy grouping and its operational reserves were defeated, and at the same time conditions were created that excluded the possibility of the enemy occupying defensive zones in the rear in order to restore the front.

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Scheme 33. Pre-war views on the construction of an offensive operation (deep operation)

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The following were considered the most important conditions for achieving the goals of the operation: the destruction of the main enemy grouping in parts in the process of its withdrawal, the preemption of the enemy in occupying lines favorable for defense with retreating units and advanced reserves. Pursuit was to be carried out by a swift advance of mobile formations along paths parallel to the withdrawal of the main enemy forces, which made it possible to preempt him at crossings, in gorges, at road junctions, delay his withdrawal, and then surround and destroy him. The main role in the pursuit was assigned to mobile formations, aviation, and airborne assault forces. They were instructed not to get involved in protracted battles for large centers of resistance or strongholds, but to bypass them.

Due to the fact that the forthcoming war was regarded as maneuverable, due attention was paid to oncoming battles. It was pointed out that they could arise both in the initial period of the war, when both sides would strive to seize the initiative, and in the course of an offensive operation, when it was possible to break through the tactical defense zone of the enemy. The characteristic features of an oncoming battle were considered to be: lack of clarity and certainty in a rapidly changing situation; the swiftness and transience of the development of hostilities, requiring every possible display of initiative; struggle for pre-emption in deployment, for winning the flanks, seizing and holding the initiative.

Decisive importance in offensive operations was attached to the organization of continuous and firm command and control of troops. Front commanders were required to correctly take into account the political and military factors of the situation, its possible changes, clearly formulate the goals of the operation, and determine the necessary human and material resources to achieve them. The most important task of the command and staff was considered to be deep penetration into the plans of the enemy, creating and maintaining superiority over him in forces and means in the main direction during the operation, the implementation of flexible maneuver by troops, maintaining stable interaction between the branches of the Armed Forces participating in the operation, military branches and elements of operational formation.

All these attitudes were basically correct and advanced for their time. However, they did not sufficiently take into account the possible opposition of the enemy, the degree of stability of modern defense, but most importantly, they relied on the moral superiority of the Red Army, which in reality did not exist, and did not take into account the real material potential of the Armed Forces. Therefore, many provisions of the offensive theory turned out to be unviable in the first years of the war and could not be implemented in practice.

Views on strategic defense

The domestic military strategy in the 1920s and 1930s recognized not only the legitimacy, but also the necessity of both operational and strategic defense. Its expediency and importance were recognized in a number of cases: in an unfavorable general strategic situation, primarily in secondary directions and theaters of military operations, to save forces, gain time, repel the offensive of superior enemy forces, consolidate the success achieved and solving other problems.

But even in those years, the attitude towards defense was very controversial. Its role, mainly due to political considerations, was downplayed. It was constantly emphasized that defense is an auxiliary form of military action and that not only a war, but also a battle cannot be won by defense. And it wasn't accidental

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because the training and education of the army was carried out in the spirit of decisive and uncompromising action, an unconditional victory in a future war.

Subsequently, the underestimation of defense, both in theory and in the practice of strategic planning, began to manifest itself more and more clearly. This became especially clear at the turn of the 1930s and 1940s. Things got to the point that they spoke of defense as "the fate of the doomed." Not only did nothing about strategic defense appear in military literature, but it was considered a great sin to mention it in conversation. True, it was not denied at all, because it was allowed as an episodic moment of the actions of the Armed Forces in the performance of the tasks of operational cover for the strategic deployment before the main forces entered the battle.

The events of the Soviet-Finnish war forced a somewhat different attitude towards defense. But her underestimation was not completely overcome then. It is no coincidence that, therefore, the problems of defense turned out to be much less developed than those of the offensive. This does not mean, however, that ideas about defense, methods of its organization and conduct did not develop. In the 1920s, under the influence of the experience of the civil war, the views on strategic defense were based on the idea of deterring and exhausting the enemy in maneuverable combat operations. Strategic defense at the beginning of a possible war was conceived as a means of ensuring the deployment of the Armed Forces or covering sectors of the front between the directions on which an offensive is being undertaken.

Justifying this position, Tukhachevsky wrote in 1923: "Our future combat clashes ... will be of a maneuverable nature, i.e. decisive and overwhelming ... The desire for decisive clashes will require bold, dense groupings on decisive directions and bold exposure of unimportant, connecting areas. The troops of the connecting sectors in unimportant directions will usually defend themselves, and with a lack of forces, they will sometimes retreat! 6. At the same time, in both the first and second cases, the question was brought to the fore: what should be staked - on the preservation of one's troops or on the retention of territory? There was a lively discussion on this issue in the press. Most of the authors were of the opinion that the main task was to save the troops from defeat. In the collective work "Army Operation", for example, it was stated: "In the case of defensive actions, the question arises of what to give preference to, whether to preserve manpower, or to preserve the defended territory at all costs. In this case, first of all, it is necessary to proceed from the position that it is impossible to defend the territory without manpower. If there is no chance of holding positions, of winning a battle, then it is better to slip away from such a situation, regroup and fight new battles in more favorable, more secure conditions. One has to risk manpower only if the area of defense coincides with the area on which the possibility of continuing the war depends, i.e., the area of the military manufacturing industry. Only in this case is it necessary to link the fate of the army with the fate of the defended zone or area ... Under normal conditions, the living armed force is the main concern of the command. During the offensive, his concern will be to destroy the enemy's manpower, while in defense and retreat, he will preserve his own manpower. Any compromises and ambiguities in resolving these issues are usually a source of failures and defeats! 7.

The possibility that circumstances might force us to leave the territory was admitted by Frunze, who, defending the legitimacy of the retreat, wrote: "... a retreat is not a flight ... there is also a strategic retreat caused by the desire to either preserve manpower or shorten the front, or to lure the enemy deeper in order to defeat him the more surely! At the same time, other authors insisted on the need to firmly hold the defensive lines, and the choice of methods for conducting strategic

military defense, the use of maneuverable or positional forms of it depended on the size of the territory of the state and the importance of the covered objects. Svechin, for example, noted: "In future wars, one must take into account the fact that at least some sections of the positional front will be organized from the very beginning, during the period of operational deployment. If the frontier stretches only a few hundred kilometers and is based on solid geographical frontiers, then we can expect the emergence of a positional front already at the beginning of the war! He also emphasized that the density of the defense of the front is determined by the nature of the area being defended. "A rich industrial center," wrote Svechin, "an important communication hub, the proximity of a highway valuable for casting, make it stronger to occupy the site; the rest of the terrain, devoid of valuable geographical objects, will be covered less, but this difference will not be as significant as in a maneuver war! 60.

Accordingly, the theory considered the possibility of organizing operational and tactical defense on a normal and on a wide front. On a normal front, it was recommended to create defense in those directions where it was necessary to hold the occupied lines, and defense on a broad front - in secondary directions, where it was necessary to hold only the most important areas. With any options for building a defense, special importance was attached to its activity, the bold infliction of decisive counterattacks and counterattacks on the enemy in order to defeat dangerous groups that had broken through, restore the situation and create a new stable defensive front. The defense was supposed to be echeloned in depth, creating security zones, main resistance and corps reserves, as well as rear lines to a depth of 100 km. The average width of the front defense zone was determined within 400 km.

Since the beginning of the 1930s, views on strategic and operational defense have changed: all attention is now focused on ensuring its insurmountability. "The defense must be insurmountable for the enemy," noted the Provisional Field Manual of 1936, "no matter how strong he may be in this direction"! '. In this regard, it was necessary to increase its ability to withstand massive attacks by large forces of artillery, aircraft and tanks. However, the development of these issues prevented the repression. In essence, this problem was returned to only in 1940, after the start of the Second World War.

At a meeting of the highest command and political staff of the Red Army, held in December 1940, General of the Army I. V. Tyulenev, in his report "The nature of the modern defensive operation," was forced to admit: "We do not have a modern substantiated theory of defense, which could oppose the modern theory and practice of a deep military offensive operation! ?. His conclusion is as follows: defensive actions, depending on the tasks envisaged by the operational plan and the conditions by which they are caused, can either be of a long-term nature, which, according to him, allegedly dooms the defender to failures, and consequently to a positional war, or temporary. , which "is caused by the regularity of the general battle and allows the defender, when the most favorable conditions are created for him, to defeat the enemy with small forces"!°. Taking into account the general plan of the war, the operational task and a number of economic reasons, he believed that defensive operations would be based on strong engineering fortifications and the wide use of the latest means of combat that were equipped with modern armies. "In order to oppose the modern powerful offensive, echeloned to a great depth, striving to simultaneously paralyze the entire defense with strong aircraft, motorized mechanized formations," Tyulenev emphasized, "it is necessary to organize the defense in such a way that it is capable of not only providing a simultaneous powerful

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treaty near the territory of the Hamio peninsula, will provide "Fyilandiya to the USSR area under a peace agreement \$ Note. Peaceful agreement was signed in Moskea on 03/12/1940. Hostilities ceased in accordance with the draft agreement 12 GS 3.03 1040

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Scheme 34. Soviet-Finnish war 1939-1940.

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fire rebuff at the entire depth of penetration of tank, motorized, aviation and infantry formations, but also to break the attacker mentally and physically with frequent counterattacks, as well as a general counteroffensive of operational reserves, in full cooperation with the troops of the front, inflict a crushing blow on the enemy "" . Nevertheless, General Tyulenev in his report limited himself only to the framework of army defensive operations. However, the Commissar of Defense Timoshenko did not raise the issue of strategic and even front-line defense in his concluding speech. As a result, the theory of strategic defense and front-line defensive operations, as before, was limited to those provisions that were related to the actions of covering forces at the beginning of the war. It was assumed that in the course of it, the troops would not need to resort to long-term defense, and even more so on a large scale, which had a negative impact on the conduct of operational and strategic defense during the Great Patriotic War.

It is true that at the same conference a number of problems of operational defense received more profound coverage than before. In particular, both Tyulenev and Timoshenko stated that one should go over to the defensive when there are not enough forces for an offensive or when, in the situation that has developed, it is advantageous in order to prepare an offensive. Both of them emphasized that the defense could be applied both on the secondary fronts and on the main directions. In the latter case, the transition to the defensive should be carried out with the aim of “waiting time until the outcome of operations on other directions, fronts or theatre” or to prepare an offensive operation, and also if “defense is an integral part of the intended maneuver of the operation”!®.

For the first time at this conference, it was pointed out that the defense should be anti-artillery, i.e., designed to preserve manpower and firepower from being hit by massive enemy artillery fire. It was also noted that modern defense should be anti-tank in order to ensure the reflection of a mass tank attack in decisive areas, when | km of the front there are 100-150 tanks of the advancing enemy. Finally, it was required that the defense be anti-aircraft, i.e., capable of withstanding the strong air impact of the advancing enemy.

Based on the experience of the Soviet-Finnish war, Timoshenko raised the question that modern defense should be “multi-echelon, multi-lane, deep, with resistance growing in depth”, as well as stubborn and active! In his opinion, all these features will find their fullest expression in the framework of an army defensive operation, although in their final form they manifested themselves primarily both on a front-line and on a strategic scale.

With regard to army defense, the meeting confirmed the requirement to create within its framework a supply zone, tactical and operational defense zones. It was pointed out that a supply strip 10-15 km deep should be created under conditions of direct contact with the enemy in order to hold him back and wear him down, gaining time to prepare a defensive strip. For its defense, advanced units and reconnaissance units were intended. The creation of a forward operational barrier zone with a depth of 30 to 50 km was also not ruled out.

The tactical defense zone was supposed to be defended by rifle corps of the first echelon. Two bands were created within its boundaries, and cut-off positions were created between them. The first strip, 8-10 km deep, was the main one; the main forces of the army and corps were allocated to hold it. It was believed that already during the battle for her, the enemy would be exhausted, bled and stopped. The strip was supposed to be created from the main position of resistance and the positions of the second combat echelons and reserves of the division. In front of the main strip, at a distance of 1-3 km, it was planned to have

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outpost position, and sometimes forward position. The second strip, on which the corps reserves were located, was supposed to block the enemy’s mobile troops that had broken through from access to the depth of defense and at the same time serve as the starting line for their own counterattacks and counterattacks. The total depth of the tactical defense zone was 15–20 km.

The operational zone included the rear army line, anti-tank areas and cut-off lines. They were intended to fight enemy mobile troops that had broken through into the depths of defense. In the operational zone, army reserves were located and operated, reinforced by armored troops and anti-tank weapons of the reserve of the High Command. The depth of the operational zone was 20–30 km, and the total depth of the army defensive area was 50–60 km. It was emphasized that the engineering equipment of the area is one of the decisive conditions that ensure the strength of the defense. Therefore, it was envisaged to have lines of continuous trenches with communication passages and shelters for personnel.

When defending in the probable direction of the enemy's main attack, the width of the troop defense zone was determined from the following average standards: for an army - 80-100 km, for a rifle corps - 20-30 km, and for a rifle division - 6-12 km. When defending in a secondary direction, the army defended in a strip of 200 km or more, a corps - 50-60 km, a division - 20-24 km. In these cases, the defense was not based on a trench system, but on pockets of resistance, mainly battalion defense areas. To repel the attack of enemy tanks, it was required to | km of the front of the main line of defense to have up to 13-17 anti-tank guns, as well as to involve all the artillery and aviation of the active troops!87. In order to disrupt the enemy attack, artillery and air counter-training was provided.

The indispensable requirements were laid at the basis of the conduct of the defense: perseverance, activity and decisiveness of actions, readiness to go on the offensive at any time. In successfully repulsing an enemy offensive, great importance was attached to the mobility of troops, their ability to quickly carry out maneuvers from the depths and from non-attacked sectors to threatened directions. Particular attention was paid to counterattacks, which were considered the highest manifestation of defensive activity. The main goal of counterattacks is to defeat the enemy who has penetrated and create conditions for going over to the offensive.

The reserves of the armies and corps were involved in the conduct of counterattacks. Counterattacks were supposed to be delivered in the course of the struggle to hold the tactical and operational defense zones, and sometimes even in front of the front line of one's defense to disrupt the enemy's offensive and inflict losses on him. Of all the options, preference

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Scheme 35. Pre-war views on the construction of operational defense

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was given to inflicting counterattacks when the enemy approached the second lane of the tactical defense zone. In the course of the struggle for the operational zone, counterattacks were to be carried out in cooperation with approaching front-line reserves. However, mechanized corps were the main means of delivering army and front-line counterattacks. Simultaneously with the conduct of positional defense, a mobile defense was also envisaged. That is how they began to call mobile defense. It was conceived to be used in cases where the overwhelming superiority of the enemy ruled out the possibility of conducting a positional defense.

The number of defensive lines and the duration of holding each of them depended on the nature of the terrain, their forces and the availability of time. On each of the planned lines, the defending troops were to organize stubborn resistance in order to force the enemy to deploy the main forces. Defensive operations on the lines were to be carried out by specially created echelons of troops. The first echelon was supposed to hold the line until the second echelon occupied the next line and organized defense on it. Only after that did the first echelon receive the task of withdrawing under the cover of fire of the second echelon to the subsequent intermediate line in order to organize defense there. [1 The last line served as the basis for the transition of troops to a stubborn positional defense or counteroffensive.

Defensive battles at intermediate lines, evasion from the enemy, combined with short strikes and actions from ambushes, were considered the basis of mobile defense. The power of maneuver defense consisted in the interaction of maneuver (mobile actions of troops) with fire and the widespread use of all types of barriers. At the same time, an important role was assigned to strong mobile reserves created in advance, especially anti-tank ones. Maneuvering defense was usually envisaged on a wide front and to a considerable depth. Unfortunately, the German attack on the USSR immediately put the Red Army in a position in which all attempts to organize and conduct strategic and operational defense on the basis of the above provisions were frustrated.

Views on the strategic use of the Air Force, Air Defense Forces and Navy

In the interwar period, active research was carried out in the field of the strategic use of the branches of the Armed Forces in a possible war.

The development of theoretical problems of the use of the Air Force was carried out by the General Staff, the Main Directorate of the Air Force, as well as a large group of military scientists. An important contribution to the solution of this problem was made by A. S. Algazin, V. Kolosovskii, A. N. Lapchinsky, S. A. Mezheninov, V. V. Khripin, and a number of other military theorists. In 1925, Kolosovsky, noting the increased importance of aviation in the war, raised the question of a special air strategy - "the art of the most rational use of air forces on the scale of the entire theater of war"¹⁶⁸. In his article "Strategy of the Air War" he singled out the following characteristic features of the air strategy: offensiveness, continuity and repetition of strikes. Mezheninov, in essence, stood on the same point of view, believing that it was necessary to create such air forces that would be capable of "carrying out an operation of self-sufficient significance" with the aim of "shaking the vital centers" on enemy territory. Algazin developed the theory of independent and joint air operations of the Air Force¹⁶⁹.

Other experts also paid tribute to aviation, but they considered its actions only in close coordination with the operations of the ground forces and the Navy. At the same time, it was believed that the Air Force would solve tasks related to conducting reconnaissance, gaining air supremacy, air support for troops

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and fleet forces, isolating the battlefield, fighting enemy reserves, destroying rear facilities, disorganizing enemy command and control, etc. These provisions were already tested in 1928 at special maneuvers of the Red Army Air Force, in which three aviation brigades and air group. The actions of the front aviation were practiced "in the interests of the ground operation" and to cover the railway from an air attack. The report on the maneuvers noted that an attack on the railroad during the period of operational transportation against the enemy's air force is nothing more than an air operation carried out by concentrating an aviation combat group as part of several brigades of the same type.

At the All-Union Bobruisk large maneuvers, held in September 1929 with the participation of the troops of the Belorussian, Moscow, Leningrad, Ukrainian and North Caucasian military districts, aviation performed the following tasks: struck at the defending "enemy", developed success by assault actions together with cavalry and with motorized units, covered its troops, bombed railways and transport hubs in order to disrupt the operational transportation of the "enemy", fought against the air "enemy" to achieve its own freedom of action.

The experience of these maneuvers was then summarized in Lapchinsky's theoretical work "Air Forces in Combat and Operations". In it, the author explored the issues of the use of aviation in various types of operations of the ground forces and in independent actions. He paid special attention to the struggle for air supremacy. According to Lapchinsky, absolute air supremacy is generally unattainable, only temporary or local air superiority can be achieved! Moreover, according to him, this requires joint actions of all types of aviation, anti-aircraft weapons, long-range artillery, rifle troops, cavalry, motorized units and partisans. Khripin, on the contrary, believed that air supremacy could be achieved not only by fighter aircraft, but also by strikes against airfields to the full operational depth. In turn, Algazin intended to achieve air supremacy by active combined and coordinated actions of all branches of aviation.

In the 1930s, theoretical studies focused on the preparation and conduct of various types of air operations by the Air Force. They worked out practically. So, in February 1934, under the leadership of the assistant commander of the Leningrad Military District for aviation, V.N. At the training camp, classes were held on the topic "Air operation to disrupt the enemy's railway transportation". Based on the results of the gathering, it was concluded that the following types of air operations are possible: air-bomber, airborne, and their combination. "The most frequent and effective form of independent use of aviation," Lopatin noted, "is an air-rail operation" ¹⁷⁰.

In 1936, by order of People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov, the Air Force was proposed to comprehensively work out "independent actions and operations of the Air Force in the conditions of interaction of aviation with other branches of the military in modern combined-arms deep combat and operations"! on this subject were contained in the "Temporary Instructions on Independent Actions of the Air Forces of the Red Army" issued in April 1936. According to it, the aviation armies of the reserve of the High Command at the beginning of the war were to strike at enemy aircraft at airfields, the navy in at sea and at bases, to destroy major political and economic centers deep in enemy territory, to thwart mobilization and strategic concentration by conducting a whole series of independent operations.

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the air army of the RGK can operate: independently in the maritime theater or on the flank of the front; in cooperation with the air forces of the front in the initial period of the war, when all combat aviation is used to inflict a decisive blow on enemy aircraft, as well as in carrying out a decisive operation in the direction of the main strike.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, air supremacy began to play a central role in the strategic use of the Air Force. Taking into account the experience of local and the outbreak of World War II P. P.]. Ionov, in his article "Supremacy in the air", published in 1937, identified three types of it: tactical,

Operational and strategic tactical dominance meant, in his opinion the achievement of aviation dominance in a limited zone of action of ground troops over the battlefield. Operational dominance was understood as temporary air supremacy for the period of a ground, air or sea operation. Strategic air supremacy was proposed to be understood as it was understood by the Italian General D. Duz, i.e., as such a situation in which we, having defeated the enemy's air forces, destroyed the sources of their restoration (warehouses and aircraft industry) and without allowing the restoration of these sources, is able to fulfill all its subsequent tasks"173.

The task of achieving strategic air superiority was supposed to be entrusted to the air armies. Such armies, called special purpose aviation armies (GAS), began to be created in January 1936. However, in 1940, based on the experience of the Soviet-Finnish war, it was concluded that they were bulky and difficult to control. That is why they were disbanded. Despite this, some military theorists considered it necessary to have strategic air armies in the Air Force to conduct independent strategic air operations.

In December 1940, at a meeting of the highest command and political staff of the Red Army, various points of view were expressed on the use of the Air Force. But the majority supported the provisions put forward in the report of the head of the Main Directorate of the Red Army Air Force, Lieutenant General of Aviation P. V. Rychagov. Among the main tasks of aviation, he emphasized the task of gaining strategic and operational air supremacy!“. Its implementation was proposed to be organized by conducting a series of air operations to destroy the enemy's existing aircraft, stocks of materiel and fuel, and the destruction of the aviation industry. On an operational scale, air supremacy was considered necessary for the duration of a particular operation. It was noted that the best way to defeat enemy aircraft on the ground is a simultaneous strike by all branches of aviation on a large number of airfields that could be based on enemy aircraft. Frontal aviation was supposed to be used primarily to support ground troops, cover them from the air, ensure landings, but especially to strike at the strategic and operational reserves of the enemy and at his rear. Particular attention was paid to the interaction of aviation with cavalry-mechanized troops. However, the problems of ensuring the survivability of the Air Force remained without a sufficiently detailed study.

The theory of the strategic use of air defense forces began to be developed in the late 1920s. Initially, it considered the protection of objects only in the border zone. Later, the question arose of organizing anti-aircraft defense of facilities throughout the country, for which it was considered expedient to create air defense zones, regions and sectors. In each of them, to repel an air attack, it was planned to have anti-aircraft artillery units, fighter aircraft, searchlight units, air surveillance, warning and

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communications (VNOS). There were different points of view regarding the use of air defense aviation. Some theorists, in particular, N. S. Vinogradov and M. Spirin, suggested concentrating fighters and other air defense systems for the defense of individual points. Others, such as A. N. Lapchinsky and M. E. Medvedev, considered it expedient to use fighter aircraft to defend an entire region or create a mobile air defense front. But despite the fact that by the beginning of the 1930s the issues of air defense were theoretically developed, in practice it was built in the old way. There was no unified air defense plan and no centralized control system!"

Under such conditions, the head of the 6th Directorate of the Staff of the Red Army, M.E. Medvedev, in September 1931, proposed to establish clear concepts for the air defense of the army and the rear (territory of the country), urgently reorganize and revise the air defense system. In subsequent years, the air defense system of the military, administrative-political and industrial point (center) was comprehensively developed. It was based on the idea of creating a deeply echeloned air defense based on close cooperation between aviation and anti-aircraft artillery. This system was designed to repel massive enemy air strikes from any direction, in a wide range of altitudes and flight speeds, at any time of the day and in any weather conditions.

Taking into account the experience of the outbreak of the Second World War and the increased capabilities of bomber aviation, the question arose of the need for not only objective, but also zonal cover for the most important centers and regions. The principles of zonal air defense were developed in detail in Vinogradov's work "Air Defense of a Large Center", published at the beginning of 1941. Their essence was that in the threatened zone the most important points were provided with point cover, and the entire threatened zone was provided with spatial cover. The fight against enemy aircraft was planned to be carried out by two methods: by destroying his aircraft at airfields by delivering strikes by bombers, and in the air by fighters and anti-aircraft artillery." In accordance with the "Manual of Air Defense Points", published in 1940, it was required to defend individual objects, points and areas most exposed to the threat of attack from the air, and to use massive air defense forces and means to cover the most important objects.

New views on the strategic use of the Navy were formed at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s. This process took place in a heated debate. Some military theorists, such as B. B. Gervais, spoke out for the need to gain complete dominance at sea by destroying the enemy fleet or blocking it in an operating base!7. This concept would require the construction of a large number of surface ships. In addition, it did not take into account the role and importance of the rapidly developing naval aviation, not to mention the use of submarines in the First World War. |

M. A. Petrov, K. I. Dushenov and others, in their works published in the second half of the 1920s, began to develop the theory of a "small war at sea". So, A. M. Yakimych, taking into account the huge cost of modern large ships and the impossibility of building a powerful battle fleet in the near future, insisted that

in order to move on to the most acceptable way of waging a struggle - to a "small war"! "8. To conduct it, he proposed using aviation, submarines, torpedo boats and other high-speed light forces of the surface fleet.

The official documents stuck to the middle. In the Provisional Field Manual of 1936, for example, it was indicated that, along with independent operations, the fleet could participate "in joint operations with ground forces on the sea

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Komsky coast"! "9. In the 1930s, considerable attention was paid to the development of a method for delivering combined strikes against a superior naval enemy. Its essence was reduced to the simultaneous attack by surface ships of various classes, submarines and aircraft using coastal defense artillery and mine artillery. The main conditions for successful operations were considered to be the creation of superiority of the forces of the fleet over the enemy in the direction of the main attack, the correct combination of dissimilar forces in operational and tactical interaction. First of all, it was planned to use submarines in the sea communications of the enemy. When conducting combat operations in the coastal areas, the fleet was supposed to support the ground forces with naval artillery fire and naval aviation strikes, cover their flanks from enemy attacks from the sea, ensure their sea communications and disrupt enemy communications, and also land amphibious assault forces in his rear. and, conversely, to forbid the landing of his amphibious assault forces.

In the 1930s, the development of the problems of logistic support of troops in operations of all types was raised to a qualitatively new level. The mobilization deployment of the rear was planned to be carried out on the basis of views on the initial period of the war. First of all, it was necessary to mobilize the rear units and institutions of the covering armies of the border military districts, as well as the main aviation and air defense forces. Front-line rear units and institutions, military educational institutions and spare parts were planned to be mobilized after the fronts were deployed, and those located in the interior of the country were to be mobilized last. Therefore, in peacetime, only a small number of strategic rear services were maintained, which were necessary to ensure the daily activities of the troops and the deployment of rear services within the time limits established by mobilization plans.

The front-line rear was supposed to be deployed on the basis of the district stationary rear establishments. To accommodate the rear units and institutions, use the local material and technical base of the front, a rear area up to 500 km deep was determined, through which 2-3 railways should pass. It was believed that in order to conduct a front-line offensive operation, it was necessary to have 8-10 rounds of ammunition, up to 10 refueling, food and grain fodder for a month! ".

The number of repair enterprises for the fronts was determined by the presence in them of combat, transport and special equipment, as well as the expected number of its repairs in preparation for and during the operation. The technical support was based on a unified preventive maintenance and repair system for all branches of the military and services: the current one was carried out by crews (crews) and military repair facilities, the middle one - in repair units and institutions of the operational level, the capital one - in repair establishments of fronts, the center and at the enterprises of the industry.

Views on the organization of medical support were reflected in the "Manual on the sanitary service of the Red Army", put into effect by order of the People's Commissar of Defense of May 9, 1941. It was planned to have a front-line evacuation point with a capacity of 40 thousand beds, evacuation and transport and anti-epidemic agents, management bodies headed by the military sanitary department. In the front rear, it was also planned to deploy local medical institutions (for 3-15 thousand beds) and auxiliary evacuation centers (for 20 thousand beds)! Military hospital trains were assigned to the front-line evacuation center at the rate of 3-5 for each corps.

The direct management of the rear of the Red Army was entrusted to the General Staff, the management of the rear of the districts, armies, formations and units - to the corresponding

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existing headquarters. It was believed that in a mobile war only combined arms headquarters would be constantly aware of the situation and would be able to properly organize the work of the rear.

This is how the system of theoretical views on the main problems of military strategy was formed on the eve of the Great Patriotic War. At the same time, a base was formed for their practical implementation in wartime.

Strategic preparation of the Armed Forces to repel aggression

The rapidly growing military danger and its biased assessment forced the Bolshevik leadership and command of the Red Army from the end of the 1920s to take more and more energetic political, economic, diplomatic and military measures to strengthen the defense of the state and prepare the Armed Forces to repel that imaginary, and then real possible aggression. They began to be carried out especially actively and on a large scale since 1940, when the threat of an imminent and inevitable war became obvious.

Considerable work has been done on these issues, but much has also been omitted. Not everything that needed to be done was achieved. As at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s, and especially on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, gross mistakes and miscalculations were made, which then put the country and the army in a difficult situation. Their essence is revealed and analyzed in many works published in recent years. Based on this analysis in the present work, it seems necessary to dwell mainly

on issues of strategic preparation of the country and the army to repulse probable aggression, primarily in such important areas as strategic planning, ensuring high constant combat readiness of the Armed Forces, planning and preparation of their strategic and mobilization deployment. These issues were constantly at the center of attention of the General Staff of the Red Army and other bodies of strategic leadership, although the approach to them changed repeatedly and, moreover, radically.

Back in the early 1920s, the Red Army Headquarters developed the first version of the war plan. In the spring of 1926, he was approved by Voroshilov, Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR. In accordance with it, the Western theater was considered the main theater of war. Within its borders, six theaters of military operations were distinguished: 1st and 2nd Finnish, Baltic, 1st and 2nd Polish, Romanian. Two options were envisaged for the possible deployment of the Red Army in the west: the first - in the event of an attack on the USSR by the armies of Poland, Romania, Estonia and Latvia with the armed neutrality of Germany, Finland and Lithuania and the indirect support of Great Britain and France; the second - in the event of an attack by Poland and Romania, with the neutrality of all the Baltic countries and the same position of the European powers.

According to both options, in order to repel possible aggression, the formations of the Red Army in the Western theater of war were planned to be increased to 112 divisions and 7 brigades. And their distribution in directions was determined depending on the options for unleashing the war. It was believed that the available forces would not be enough to counter the combined forces of the enemy, whose armed forces after their deployment were estimated at 122 infantry and cavalry divisions. In this situation, the Red Army was given the task of destroying the enemy groupings in the northwest, west and southwest in turn. The sequence of strikes was established depending on the specific conditions of the military-political situation.

These estimates and plans were revised in the early 1930s. At the same time, the qualitative strengthening of the enemy's armed forces, the strengthening of the military threat not only in the west, but in the east and south, as well as the increased military and economic

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sky opportunities of the USSR. Based on this, the cutting of theaters of military operations has changed. In addition to the Western, the Middle East, Middle East, Far East and Baltic-Scandinavian theater of operations began to be considered. The main theater of war was still the Western one. According to the calculations of the Headquarters of the Red Army, a probable enemy in this theater in the event of a war against the USSR will be able to field 123 divisions, 1 340 aircraft and 500 tanks. To the east, China and Japan, and to the south, Iran and Turkey can deploy 63 divisions, 875 aircraft, and 160 tanks.

To repel a possible attack according to the "MP-3] schedule on the western borders, it was planned to deploy 110 rifle divisions, the main forces of the strategic cavalry, almost all tanks and most of the aviation. Unlike previous plans, their deployment was planned to be carried out with some preemption. At the same time, it was taken into account that, as the main enemy, Poland could complete the concentration and deployment of its army on the 16th day of mobilization. To preempt it, it was supposed to deploy the first strategic echelon of the Red Army on the 12th day of mobilization, and the second - on the 28th day. In accordance with this, it was planned to concentrate the main forces (63 divisions) north of Polesie, where the main attack of the Polish army was expected.

In connection with a sharp change in the international situation in the mid-1930s, especially after Hitler came to power in Germany and signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, strategic planning began to be carried out on fundamentally new assessments. Germany was considered the main adversary of the USSR, and Poland, Hungary, Finland, Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were considered as its possible allies. The war plan developed with this in mind by the General Staff of the Red Army provided that aggression could be unleashed against the Soviet Union with the participation of Poland, Estonia and Finland, but with the neutrality of the rest of the Baltic states. According to the General Staff of the Red Army, they could take from 20 to 30 days to deploy their armies. The probable grouping of the enemy's armed forces was estimated at 137 divisions, 13 brigades, up to 7,500 guns, 6,300 tanks and tankettes, and about 3,700 aircraft. It was expected that up to 90 divisions from this number would be involved in the main forces north of Polesye. On the part of the Red Army, to repel the attack north of Polesie, it was planned to deploy 82 divisions, and after that it was envisaged the possibility of delivering a preemptive strike against the deploying enemy in order to defeat him in parts. In the east, Japan was considered as a possible adversary.

At the end of the 1930s, the unfavorable development of the situation in the world, especially in Europe, forced the leadership of the USSR and the Red Army to once again radically revise all assessments and strategic calculations. On March 24, 1938, Shaposhnikov, Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, presented a report on a new variant of the strategic deployment of the USSR Armed Forces for consideration by People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov. In November, it was analyzed at a meeting of the Main Military Council and basically approved.

In accordance with the revised assessment, the Soviet Union had to prepare for a war on two fronts: in the west - against Germany, Italy, Poland and Romania, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which gravitated towards them; in the east against Japan. It was believed that these states could field from 230 to 240 infantry, motorized and cavalry divisions, 13,077 guns, 7,980 tanks, and 5,775 aircraft. It was assumed that 146-156 divisions, 8,500 guns, 6,380 tanks and 4,136 aircraft would be involved in the west. The deployment of these forces was presented in two ways. The first option: to the north of Polesie, a grouping of almost 90 divisions, 8 cavalry brigades, 5,500 guns, 3,800 tanks and 2,700 aircraft was created, and to the south of Polesie - about 40 divisions and 13 cavalry brigades, 2,000 guns, 2,500

tanks and 1,000 aircraft. The second option was considered less likely: 43 divisions, 2,168 guns, 1,000 tanks and 900 aircraft would be deployed north of Polesie, and 93 divisions, 5,332 guns, 4,700 tanks and 2,800 aircraft would be deployed south of it! ?. The deployment of Japanese troops in the Eastern theater of operations was expected, consisting of 27-33 divisions, 9 brigades, 2,827 guns, 1,400 tanks and 1,000 aircraft.

It was planned to deploy Soviet troops in such a way as to inflict defeat on the enemy both in the west and in the east, and the main efforts - up to 80% of all - forces were supposed to be concentrated on the Western theater of operations. In the event of aggression in this theater, it was planned to immediately repel the attack of the enemy, go on the offensive as soon as possible and deliver the main blow to him either to the north of Polesie or to the south of it. On the Eastern theater of operations, the task was to prevent the invasion of Japanese troops into the Far East, inflict a decisive defeat on them in Northern Manchuria and hold the Pacific coast.

But a year later, the situation has changed radically. Among the new factors that determined the need to revise the war plan and the entire system of strategic planning, three became of particular importance: a change in the foreign policy of the USSR, the signing of a non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany on August 23, 1939, and the beginning of World War II.

In accordance with the secret protocol attached to the Soviet-German treaty, the spheres of interest of the two countries were delimited. The border between them in case of territorial and political changes in Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was established along the northern border of Lithuania, and in Poland along the line of the Narew, Vistula and San rivers. In addition, the Soviet Union was given the right to realize its interests in relation to Bessarabia.

Further events developed rapidly. | On September 1939, the Wehrmacht troops attacked Poland and began to quickly move deep into its territory. The governments of France and Great Britain declared war on Germany, but did not take active military actions to help Poland. On September 17, Soviet troops (Ukrainian and Belorussian fronts) crossed the Polish border. Advancing almost without resistance, by the beginning of October they reached the demarcation line Lvov-Brest-Bialystok, while capturing more than 450 thousand Polish soldiers and officers!®. On September 29, an agreement on friendship and border was signed between the USSR and Germany, again with the application of secret protocols and a map. In accordance with the secret protocol, the territory of Lithuania fell into the sphere of interests of the Soviet Union, and Lublin and part of the Warsaw provinces went to Germany.

Under pressure from the USSR, the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania entered into negotiations with the Soviet government. On September 28, Estonia was forced to sign an agreement with the USSR, on October 5, Latvia, and on October 10, Lithuania. Under these treaties, the Soviet Union undertook to provide them with military assistance in the event of an attack on them by any power. To this end, he received the right to deploy his troops on their territory, to create naval and air bases. For their part, the Baltic states also pledged to provide assistance to the USSR in the event of an attack on it by any European power through their territory, as well as from the Baltic Sea.

The leadership of the USSR offered to sign a similar kind of agreement to the government of Finland. In October 1939, at the talks in Moscow, the Finnish delegation was asked to conclude a mutual assistance pact, which provided for the deployment of a contingent of Soviet troops and the creation of military bases in Finland. However, her government did not accept this proposal. Then a new version was submitted for consideration. Its essence was to push back the existing state border on the Karelian Isthmus by several decimal points.

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hundreds of kilometers deep into Finland, to transfer to the USSR a number of islands in the Gulf of Finland, part of the Rybachy and Sredny peninsulas in the Barents Sea, as well as the peninsula of Hanko on lease for 30 years for the construction of a Soviet naval base there. In exchange for this, Finland was offered twice the size, but unequal in quality and value, the territory of North Karelia. The Finnish government, referring to its neutrality, declared that it could not cede Hanko and the islands, but was ready to make other equivalent concessions, while it assessed the claims of the USSR as a manifestation of "Russian imperialism". In this regard, the Finns warned Moscow that they would defend their territory and independence by any means. In Moscow, this was regarded as a direct threat to the USSR.

In the second half of November 1939, the troops of the 7th Army of the Leningrad Military District received an order, together with aviation and the forces of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, to defeat the Finnish units, capture the fortified Mannerheim Line on the Karelian Isthmus, and then, in cooperation with the 8th Army advance in the general direction towards the capital of Finland — Helsinki!*" .

The reason for the start of hostilities was an incident inspired by the Soviet side, near the village of Mainila. According to the official version of the headquarters of the Leningrad Military District, Finnish artillery fired on Soviet territory on November 26, which led to the death of 4 and the wounding of 9 commanders and Red Army soldiers. It is clear, however, that Finland was in no way interested in this. The inglorious war that began on November 30 revealed major shortcomings in the combat capability and training of the Red Army, which cost it great sacrifices! Only by mid-March 1940 was Finland forced to sign a peace treaty, according to which the border northwest of Leningrad was moved beyond the Vyborg-Sartavala line. The Karelian Isthmus, a number of islands in the Gulf of Finland, a small territory with the city of Kuolajärvi, as well as part of the Rybachy and Sredny peninsulas departed to the USSR, the Hanko Peninsula was leased to the Soviet side with the right to create a naval base on it. In the summer of 1940, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were included in the USSR, and then Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were annexed.

As a result of all these measures, the state border of the USSR was moved to the west. In strategic terms, this circumstance certainly had a positive significance, since it made it possible to reduce the threat to a number of the most important industrial and administrative centers of the country, to gain space and time to repel the imminent German aggression. But at the same time, the transfer of the border caused a lot of complications associated with the need to restructure the entire grouping of troops of the first strategic echelon, firmly strengthen the new borders, operational equipment of the acquired territories, and rework all operational plans.

In the second half of 1940, the construction of 20 fortified regions (UR) began on the new border, designed to reliably cover important operational areas, as well as to create strongholds for field troops in defense and offensive operations. To manage the construction of SD in the system of the People's Commissariat of Defense, the Office of the Construction Superintendent (UNS) was created, which was headed by Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Marshal Shaposhnikov. To carry out construction work, 84 newly formed construction battalions, 25 separate construction companies and 17 automobile battalions were involved. In addition, since April 1941, 160 engineer and sapper battalions of border districts and 41 | sapper battalion of internal districts*. Although extremely short deadlines were set for the completion of the work, due to the lack of materials and weapons, construction was delayed. In order to somehow rectify the situation, the military councils of the Baltic, Kyiv and Western Oso

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The former military districts, with the approval of the government, decided to remove guns from many pillboxes of mothballed old URs and transfer them to equip fortified areas under construction. However, even this forced measure could not satisfy all the needs for weapons. By the beginning of the war, the construction of new SDs had not been completed. Of the built 2.5 thousand pillboxes, only about | thousand had guns, the rest were equipped with machine guns. Between some SDs and defense nodes there were completely unfortified sections with a width of 10 to 8 km or more. Moreover, most of the fortified areas were in the immediate vicinity of the border. Their firing structures could even be hit by direct fire, since they were in the enemy's observation zone. And the combat readiness of some SDs was not up to par due to the understaffing of permanent garrisons.

Together with long-term firing structures, various kinds of fortifications were erected in the border zone for field troops. The construction of rear defensive lines behind the new SDs was planned only with the start of the war. Therefore, the line of the old fortified areas remained the only rear defensive line of operational-strategic purpose. The Directive of the General Staff of April 8, 1941 obliged the commanders of the Western and Kiev Special Military Districts to keep the Sebezh, Slutsk, Shepetovsky, Izyaslavsky, Starokonstantinovsky and Ostropolsky URs in such a state of conservation that on the 10th day of the war they could be brought into combat readiness. But this requirement remained on paper. Since February 1941, the construction of anti-amphibious defense began on the islands of Saaremaa (Ezel), Hiiumaa (Dago), Moon, as well as in Viipavsky and Libavsky UR on the coast of the Baltic Sea. However, by the beginning of the war, construction work there was in the stage of deployment.

Work on the creation of field airfields in the border areas and the construction of concrete runways at permanent airfields received a large scale that spring. It was envisaged to build 190 airfields. However, the lack of manpower and means, not to mention time, did not allow the plan to be completed by the start of the war. In many areas, aviation was still crowded and too close to the border, there were not enough alternate airfields. But the main thing is different: the location of all airfields was exactly known to the enemy.

The construction of railways and highways, various warehouses and communication lines was essential in the preparation of the Western theater of operations. The capacity of railways and roads in the Baltic States, Western Belarus and Western Ukraine was insufficient, moreover, the railways still needed to be changed to the All-Union gauge. The main railway junctions remained underdeveloped, since many lines did not have second tracks, which greatly affected the ability to ensure the strategic deployment of troops with the start of the war. It was also not possible to complete the laying of underground COMMUNICATION lines.

Along with this, measures were taken to strengthen the composition of the border military districts. In the second half of April, the formation of 10 artillery anti-tank brigades of the High Command reserve and 4 airborne corps began in the western border military districts. From the internal military districts, Transbaikalia and the Far East, 8 rifle divisions and 2 airborne brigades were transferred to the west. In addition, it was planned to send control 2 rifle and mechanized corps, 2 rifle, 2 tank and | motorized division. The troops were understaffed and equipped with new equipment. In May and early June, about 800 thousand military men were called up from the reserve, which made it possible to increase the staffing of almost 100 rifle divisions.

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visions, a number of SD and other troops. On May 14, the People's Commissar of Defense ordered the early release of cadets of military schools and their immediate dispatch to the troops. Even earlier, he ordered the commanders of the border military districts all divisions stationed in the rear areas to | July secretly move closer to the state border, to the areas assigned to them according to the defense plan. But the border divisions remained in their original place, and their withdrawal to the state border could only be carried out by special order.

Due to the fact that Stalin, and under his pressure, the General Staff of the Red Army erroneously assessed the situation and

intentions of a potential adversary, all the necessary measures to bring the Armed Forces to a combat-ready state were not taken. The information received from intelligence about the concentration of about 160 fully combat-ready German divisions near the Soviet borders, about a possible attack by the Wehrmacht on June 15, 22 or 25, 1941, about the probable plans of the German command, which almost exactly reproduced the Barbarossa plan, Moscow either ignored or viewed them as provocative. Moreover, on June 14, the Pravda newspaper published a TASS report declaring that rumors about Germany's intention to break the pact and launch an attack on the USSR were completely groundless. All this disorientated the command of the Red Army, tied his hands and dulled his vigilance.

Despite the extreme danger looming over the USSR, the leaders showed careless slowness in reworking the war plan. Its preparation was carried out from the beginning of 1940, and the first version was ready by the end of July of that year. But the plan was not considered. It was not until September that People's Commissar for Defense Timoshenko submitted to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, Stalin and Molotov a report on the principles of the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces. The report, as well as the plan for 1938-1939, pointed out that the Soviet Union had to be ready to fight on two fronts: in the west against Germany supported by Italy, Hungary, Romania and Finland, and in the east against Japan, while occupying a position of armed neutrality. True, the forces of Germany, its allies and Japan were determined on a more significant scale: 280-300 divisions, 12 thousand tanks, almost 30 thousand guns and 14-15 thousand combat aircraft! ". It was assumed that the enemy would inflict his main blows on Riga, Kovno, Polotsk and Minsk. At the same time, the possibility of its advance from Suwalki and Brest to Volkovysk and Baranovichi, as well as from the Lublin region to Kyiv, was allowed.

The options for the deployment of the Red Army remained the same, but the groupings were significantly strengthened. The proposal of the Chief of the General Staff Shaposhnikov to concentrate the main forces of the Red Army north of Polotsk was categorically rejected by People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko. On October 5, 1940, the plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army was considered by the country's leadership. At the same time, Stalin pointed out to the People's Commissar of Defense and the General Staff the need for a more prominent designation of the concentration of efforts in Europe, primarily in the southwestern direction, and therefore the Southwestern Front should have been further strengthened. Although the second option for deploying the main forces (to the north of Pripyat) was not rejected, it did not receive support either. The document, finalized with these amendments, was approved on October 14 by the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the government of the USSR. Its final adjustment was carried out in May and early June 1941. At the same time, another 25 divisions were allocated to the southwestern direction.

The redirection of the main efforts from the western to the southwestern direction was a serious mistake made under direct pressure from Stalin, who believed that the main events would unfold precisely in the south. He was absolutely convinced that Germany would first of all set out to take possession of Ukraine and the Donbass, without

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which she allegedly is not in a position to wage a long war. As a result of this decision, the western direction was weakened.

In total, to repel possible aggression from the Third Reich and its allies, it was planned to attract 237 rifle divisions out of 303, 51 tank divisions out of 61, 25 motorized divisions out of 31, all anti-tank brigades and airborne corps, the main part of the artillery regiments of the RGC and air tionl88. The troops of the first strategic echelon (186 divisions) were supposed to be brought together into four fronts: Northwestern, Western, Southwestern and Northern. The second strategic echelon was to be 51 divisions of the RGC. The deployment was covered by the armies of the first echelon of the frontier military districts. Essentially, the cover plan was based on the principle of organizing army defense, and the actions of the fronts in the event of a surprise attack by the enemy were not determined. Measures were not developed in the event of a possible disruption of the enemy's deployment.

The new scheme for the strategic deployment of the USSR Armed Forces, of course, required a radical revision of the mobilization plan. From August 1940 to January 1941, the General Staff prepared three versions of the plan. In February, the last version was reported to Stalin and approved by him, although some refinements of the plan continued until June. In comparison with the plan of 1938-1939. the share of deployed rifle divisions was reduced by 2.3%, and that of cavalry formations by 3 times. The number of deployed mechanized formations increased 5 times, and aviation units and air defense forces - 2 times!*. Although this was the right decision, many of the shortcomings inherent in the previous plan were never eliminated. In particular, it was planned to form an unrealistically large number of new formations and units, did not take into account the capabilities of industry to provide troops with weapons and military equipment, and did not determine measures to complete mobilization in the event of a preemptive strike by the enemy.

In January 1941, two operational-strategic games were held at the General Staff under the leadership of Timoshenko to test the main provisions of the new war plan. They made it possible to refine a number of calculations, but the most important question, connected with repelling a sudden attack by an aggressor, remained unresolved. The true position of the troops on the border was also insufficiently clarified, which did not make it possible to truly assess the weakness of the groupings created there.

In mid-May, when the situation became even more aggravated, five (19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, and 16th) armies from the North Caucasus, Oryol, Volga, Ural, and Transbaikal military districts began a covert advance to the west. But in June it was partially suspended. From June 13, separate measures were taken to deploy cover troops. Literally at the last moment, instructions were given to mask the airfields, but they did not have time to fulfill them. On June 18, the districts received an order to separate front-line departments and send them to command posts. But all these measures were carried out too timidly, and most importantly - with great delay.

The fleet was more organized. On June 19, People's Commissar of the Navy N. G. Kuznetsov, at his own peril and risk, ordered all fleets to switch to combat readiness No. 2, and on the night of June 22, by his order, all fleets and flotillas were put on full combat readiness No. 1. This allowed the sailors to successfully repel the first blows of the enemy and, on the whole, to start hostilities in an organized manner. On June 13, Timoshenko tried to convince Stalin of the need to put the troops of the border military districts on alert and deploy the first echelons according to cover plans, but Stalin said to all the reasoned arguments of the people's commissar: "Are you

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do you propose to mobilize the country, raise troops now and move them to the western borders? This is war!" '%. Alas! It was too late to get Stalin's consent to the directive on combat readiness, which was issued only on the night of June 22. As a result, it simply did not reach many headquarters and troops.

By the morning of June 22, 1941, the Soviet troops were located as follows:

All troops of the Leningrad Military District remained in their places of permanent deployment. To strengthen the Kandalaksha direction, one tank division was transported by rail. In the Baltic Special Military District, 6 rifle divisions of the 8th and 11th armies, 2 mechanized corps (without mobilization) were in full combat readiness. 3 divisions of the 8th Army occupied the defense areas according to the cover plan. 3 divisions of the front and army reserves advanced to the border from the depths of the territory of the district, while the rest continued to remain in camps and deployment points.

In the Western Special Military District, all formations and units of the armies of the first echelon were located in places of permanent deployment. 3 rifle corps, advanced from the depths of the territory of the district, were 150-400 km from the border. In the depths of the district, an airborne and 2 mechanized corps, 3 anti-tank brigades were formed, for which there were not enough technical means.

The troops of the Kyiv Special Military District also remained at their permanent deployment points. 5 rifle corps of the district reserve made a march 100-250 km from the border. In the depths of the territory of the district there were airborne and 3 mechanized corps. Only in the Odessa Military District were first-echelon divisions alerted, and aviation dispersed to operational airfields.

In total, by June 22, the western border military districts had 170 divisions, 2 separate rifle and 2 airborne brigades. In addition, 7 divisions, 2 brigades, 11 operational regiments of internal troops and 49 border detachments were located on their territory. 10-50 km from the border in the first echelon of the covering armies were 53 rifle and 3 cavalry divisions, 2 separate rifle brigades. The second echelon, located 50-100 km or more from the border, consisted of 13 rifle, 3 cavalry, 24 tank and 12 motorized divisions. 62 district reserve divisions were concentrated 100-400 km from the border, and another 13 divisions intended for the Southwestern Front and the reserve armies of the High Command were concentrated at the turn of the Western Dvina and Dnieper rivers. 10 divisions of internal military districts were on the move! !. All aircraft remained at permanent airfields.

In general, the grouping of troops created was not prepared either for defense or for an offensive. This is one of the main reasons for the heavy setbacks that befell the Red Army at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. In fact, this is the result of those serious contradictions that characterized the development of the domestic military strategy in the interwar period. Along with many unconditionally correct ideas, it also included clearly erroneous attitudes. In turn, strategic practice often did not take into account the conclusions of theory, but proceeded, as a rule, from pragmatic considerations, which sometimes made it possible to successfully solve current problems, but manifested themselves very negatively in the long term.

Chapter Four

MILITARY STRATEGY IN THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

The Great Patriotic War is one of the most difficult and tragic periods in the history of our Motherland. It was the most severe test for the country, it required incredible efforts and great sacrifices. But, of course, the most important test had to be taken by the army and navy, and with them the principles of military development, the training and employment of the Armed Forces, and the theory and practice of military affairs.

In the course of the war, domestic military-theoretical thought and military practice were developed in many ways, and this was an important factor in achieving victory. This process took place in a tense confrontation with the enemy. It was especially sharp and uncompromising in the field of military strategy.

There were many cases when the military strategy of the Third Reich achieved significant success, ensured major victories for the Wehrmacht, put the military-political leadership and the Armed Forces of our country in a difficult, and sometimes critical situation. But one way or another, the military strategy of the enemy, in the end, failed, and the domestic one, despite temporary setbacks, turned out to be, as a rule, on top. Having taken a new, big step in its development and demonstrating its high level, it convincingly proved its complete superiority over the military strategy of fascist Germany and eventually won.

The experience of the war confirmed, on the whole, the correctness and viability of many of its fundamental propositions worked out in the prewar years. However, not all pre-war views passed the severe test of the war. First of all, this has to do with the ideas that developed in the prewar years about the nature and methods of waging war, the role of its initial period, the system of strategic actions of the Armed Forces and the strategic management of them. Most of the other military-strategic provisions and guidelines were not only not refuted, but were also confirmed, enriched in content and further developed on the battlefields. Their creative application in many ways contributed to the successful solution of problems,

facing the Armed Forces. Based on them, the military strategy solved a wide range of complex problems related to repelling deep enemy strikes, breaking through its operational and strategic defenses, successively defeating large enemy groupings, and conducting joint operations by branches of the Armed Forces and large strategic groupings. , management of coalition groupings of troops, creation of an effective system of strategic leadership of the Armed Forces.

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In the course of the war, the dependence of strategy on politics became even clearer. In essence, in none of the past wars were the strategic goals, plans and plans of the parties, the direction of the use of armed forces, their tasks under such political pressure as in this war. Sometimes political considerations played a decisive role in determining the significance of the fronts, the sequence of operations, the concentration of the main efforts of the Armed Forces, not to mention such fundamental issues as the opening of a second front, the volume of military assistance to the allies, the order of withdrawal of opponents from the war, etc. Therefore, it is no coincidence that it was for political reasons that in a number of cases decisions were taken that were not entirely expedient from the point of view of the strategy and, on the contrary, the actions necessary in the strategic plan were rejected.

The dependence of military strategy on the economy has increased to the same extent. This found its expression in the direct dependence of the methods and forms of armed struggle used on the transfer of the economy to a military footing, the development of military production, the supply of weapons and military equipment to the Armed Forces, as well as in the organization of targeted actions to destroy the enemy's most important industrial centers, capture him the main areas for the extraction of coal, oil and other types of strategic raw materials, conducting major operations on the enemy's railway and sea communications.

During the war years, military strategy, as never before, was supported by all forms of ideological and diplomatic struggle. Ideological and diplomatic means were effectively used in order, on the one hand, to try to spread the ranks of the enemy, which means weakening him, to split his coalition, and on the other hand, to strengthen the morale of his soldiers and the population of the country, to strengthen the political positions of his own state. to rally the anti-Hitler coalition as much as possible, to achieve from the allies closer coordination of efforts in the field of armed struggle.

During the course of the war, both theory and practice of military strategy developed in parallel. But the preference, of course, was given to practice. The tasks that arose and the situation that developed made it necessary to actively look for more effective forms of strategic actions, to improve the organization of the Armed Forces and the methods of their application. The theory of strategy followed practice. With a certain time gap, she summarized the accumulated experience, substantiated the achievements of practice, developed new provisions, which, in turn, pushed the practical strategy to the search for more effective solutions and actions.

1. The main directions of the development of military strategy during the war

Throughout the war, the military strategy of the USSR was characterized by high activity and was subordinated to one common goal - to protect the country from external aggression and achieve victory over the enemy. This goal was achieved by the fulfillment of specific military-political tasks carried out by the Armed Forces during certain periods of the war. The most important of them were: at the beginning of the war — repelling aggression, disrupting the offensive plans of the enemy, defeating the invading groupings of his troops; then - the expulsion of the enemy from the territories he occupied and the transfer of hostilities outside the country; at the end of the war - the liberation of the states of Eastern Europe, the withdrawal of Germany's allies from the war and forcing her to unconditional surrender. In turn, each of the military-political tasks required the solution of a complex set of general and particular military-strategic tasks carried out in the course of individual military

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panies, battles and major strategic operations carried out in the unified system of strategic actions of the Armed Forces.

During the course of the war, the system of strategic actions of the Armed Forces, however, as well as the strategy of warfare as a whole, changed several times. We are talking about the goal, the nature of the armed struggle, the scale, spatial and temporal characteristics of the operations being carried out, and their content. Usually, periods of sharp turning points were combined with the evolutionary development of strategy. This process proceeded along an ascending line, obeying the general laws of the development of armed struggle. It was decisively influenced by the constantly changing military-political and strategic situation, the real balance of forces and means, and changes in the balance of economic and military capabilities of the parties. With the expansion of military production, the quantitative growth and qualitative improvement of the Soviet Armed Forces, the receipt of new types of weapons and equipment for their equipment, the military strategy became more and more decisive. It was greatly influenced by the special conditions of warfare, but above all by the following three factors.

First of all, this is the disproportionate effort expended by the USSR and its Western allies in the fight against a common enemy, especially in the first and most difficult years of the war for the Soviet Union. For three years, he was forced to actually fight one on one with the main forces of fascist Germany and its European partners. In any case, until the summer of 1944, 15 to 20 times more enemy forces were concentrated on the Soviet-German front than on all other fronts where American-British troops (North Africa and Italy) fought. At that time, from 70 to 75% of all divisions and about 75% of the military equipment of the fascist bloc acted against the Soviet Armed Forces. At the same time, they account for the bulk of their losses. From June 22, 1941 to June 30, 1944, the irretrievable losses of the army and navy amounted to 9,645 thousand, and sanitary - 13,617 thousand people, or 78.6% of the total losses for the entire war?.

The distribution of forces along the fronts changed only after the opening of the second front in Europe, however, even in the future, the enemy had 1.8-2.8 times less forces in other European theaters of operations than on the Soviet-German front. This is clear evidence that the military strategy of the USSR had a decisive influence on the strategy of the entire Second World War. Moreover, the Soviet command solved not only purely its own tasks, but also indirectly contributed to the actions of the allied armies. Of course, despite their limited scale, the operations of the Anglo-American troops were also of no small importance, because they somehow alleviated the position of the Soviet Armed Forces. However, at that time they did not pose a particular threat to the enemy and at critical moments could not prevent the transfer of his troops from the West to the East, which the Soviet leadership had to constantly reckon with.

In strategic terms, the USSR was most interested in the Allies opening a second front in Western Europe in 1941-1943. Subsequently, the severity of this issue decreased, and in the second half of 1944, when it became obvious that the USSR was capable of defeating Germany on its own, the need for the help of the allies completely faded into the background. Moreover, in the strategic actions of the armed forces of the participants in the anti-Hitler coalition, even elements of competition appeared. Each of them sought to quickly achieve greater results in order to take full advantage of the fruits of the approaching victory.

More than once, the Soviet command had to take into account in its strategic decisions and actions such a factor as the potential possibility of moving

from a war on one front to a war on several fronts, simultaneously in the west, east and south. Such a threat became the most real in connection with a possible attack by Japan, which did not stop its military preparations on the Far Eastern borders of the USSR. The danger of Turkey's entry into the war also remained. In this regard, December 1941 and September-October 1942, ie, the periods of the highest successes of the Wehrmacht, when its troops advanced on Moscow, Stalingrad and the Caucasus, turned out to be critical.

That is why the Soviet leadership, even in the most difficult situation on the Soviet-German front, had to keep significant groupings of troops on the Far Eastern and southern borders of the country. On | On December 1941, the number of formations stationed there in terms of people and artillery was almost half of what was in the active army, there were 1.3 times more tanks, and combat aircraft - an equal number. In 1942-1943. it was slightly less: more than a third of the personnel, two thirds of tanks, self-propelled guns and combat aircraft, more than a quarter of guns and mortars.

For almost two years, this, naturally, greatly complicated the solution of many strategic tasks on the Soviet-German front, forced us to develop a war strategy taking into account the situation not only in Europe, but also in Asia, accurately calculate the levels of possible risk and distribute forces accordingly. along the fronts. A special task of the strategy in such a situation was the organization of an inter-theatre maneuver of troops, forces and means. Along with the planning of operations on the Soviet-German front, a parallel adjustment of plans for possible military operations in the Far East and the south of the country was required.

Only from the middle of 1943, when the direct threat of war from Japan and Turkey was removed, did it become possible to freely dispose of forces and means, although the task of deterring potential adversaries was not removed until the end of the war in Europe. Another turn in the domestic military strategy took place in 1945, even before the victory over Germany, when it became necessary to prepare for the upcoming military campaign against Japan. This required the organization of a strategic regrouping of forces in the opposite direction - from west to east. In other words, the strategy of waging war on the main front in Europe, the Soviet-German one, was in one way or another closely connected with the strategy of readiness for large-scale operations in other theaters of military operations.

And finally, another characteristic feature distinguished the domestic military strategy. It consisted in the fact that from the very beginning the war took a very unfavorable turn for the USSR. The enemy firmly seized the initiative and inflicted huge, seemingly irreparable losses on the country and its Armed Forces. In essence, most of the cadre army was lost. Only the irretrievable losses of the Soviet Armed Forces for the first 1.5 years of the war amounted to 6,396 thousand people, or 56.7% of the losses for the entire war. They lost 9.6 million small arms (62.1%), 208.7 thousand artillery pieces and mortars (65.7%), 35.6 thousand tanks (36.8%), and 30 thousand combat aircraft (34%)*.

The consequences of this were especially felt in 1941 and 1942. in the face of a decrease in the economic potential of the country and the transition of the economy to a military footing. The troops at the front experienced an acute shortage of armored vehicles, combat aircraft, anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, automatic weapons, communications and vehicles, but especially in ammunition, for which the shortage in 1942 was the largest in all the years of the war. The Soviet Armed Forces had to conduct military operations with a clearly unfavorable balance of forces and means, and low operational densities. The lack of tanks, armored personnel carriers, tractors, and road transport limited the maneuverability

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troop capabilities. Both in the defense and in the offensive, the necessary reliability of the fire engagement of the enemy was not ensured. As a result, the troops suffered unreasonably large losses, many of the operations undertaken did not lead to the expected success; often they remained incomplete, and sometimes even ended in failure.

Under such conditions, a number of complex problems arose in the field of strategy, primarily related to the radical reorganization of the Armed Forces, the elimination of the resulting imbalances, the completion of strategic deployment, the reflection of deep enemy attacks, the restoration of the disrupted strategic front, the seizure of the operational and strategic initiative. , successive destruction of large enemy groupings.

From the very beginning, the war violated many pre-war strategic plans and calculations. That is why it was necessary to revise the entire system of strategic actions, to make extraordinary decisions, to develop and implement strategic guidelines that were fundamentally different from some pre-war provisions.

Thus, it was previously assumed that the future war would be a class war between the proletarian state and the entire capitalist world. Stalin himself proceeded from this in the first place. Hitler actually counted on this, bearing in mind the inevitability of the political and military isolation of the USSR. Life, however, made its own adjustments: differences in ideology and social order did not prevent the Soviet Union from uniting with the democratic states of the West in the struggle against a common enemy. On the contrary, the clash of interests within the capitalist world turned out to be stronger than the contradictions that existed before between the USSR, the USA and Great Britain. And this, in turn, led to the formation of a powerful anti-Hitler coalition and forced its members to radically reconsider both military policy and military strategy.

Before the war, there was no doubt that the Soviet Armed Forces would conduct military operations mainly on foreign territory, while they had to fight on their own soil for more than three years.

Finally, it was believed that the war would be exclusively maneuverable, while in the course of it

both maneuverable and positional forms of struggle have found wide application. It was planned that defense would have to be resorted to only in exceptional cases, but in fact it had to be organized too often, and not only on an operational, but also on a strategic scale.

The system of operations of the Armed Forces seemed relatively simple before the war. It was expected that strategic tasks would be carried out by the forces of fronts and fleets in front-line operations. In fact, the system of operations has assumed an extremely complex form. Within its framework, strategic operations of groups of fronts, front-line defensive, counter-offensive and offensive operations, army operations of all types, air and anti-air operations, landing and anti-amphibious operations, and naval operations with various goals have found application. Moreover, the operation of a group of fronts became the main form of strategic action.

The most important and radical changes in strategy occurred during the transition from one period of the war to another. It was at this time that the entire military-political and military-strategic situation at the front and in the rear changed radically, and new tasks of armed struggle arose. The military strategy changed accordingly.

The first period of the war (June 22, 1941 - November 18, 1942) was the most difficult for the USSR and its Armed Forces, and vice versa, the most favorable for

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Background

Scheme 37. The general course of hostilities in the first period of the Great Patriotic War (June 22, 1941 - November 18, 1942)

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fascist Germany. At this stage, the strategy of lightning war adopted by the Reich was opposed by the Soviet side to the strategy of forced defense. The purpose of strategic actions was to disrupt the blitzkrieg, undermine the Wehrmacht's offensive potential, buy time to complete the deployment of its Armed Forces, transfer industry to a war footing, wrest the strategic initiative from the hands of the enemy, and change the military-political situation in their favor.

This goal was achieved by solving several successive strategic tasks: the formation of a more effective system of state administration and strategic leadership of the Armed Forces in relation to wartime conditions; the forced organization of a strategic defense, exhausting the enemy on successively defended lines, withdrawing friendly troops from the enemy's blows; repelling the invasion and subsequent offensive of the enemy, first on the entire Soviet-German front, and then on only one southern strategic direction; inflicting maximum damage to the main strike groupings of the enemy by stubborn defense, counterattacks and conducting private offensive operations; launching a counteroffensive and seizing the strategic initiative; restoring the combat readiness of the Armed Forces, building up their composition and creating large strategic reserves; deployment of armed struggle behind enemy lines.

During the first period, the Soviet Armed Forces conducted two summer-autumn defensive campaigns (in 1941 and 1942) and one offensive campaign (in the winter of 1941/1942). During them, 12 strategic defensive, 4 strategic offensive, | a large-scale amphibious landing operation, not to mention a number of private front-line defensive and offensive operations.

Despite the fact that even in the border battles, the Nazi troops managed to encircle and destroy a significant part of the forces of the North-Western, Western, South-Western, and then the Southern Fronts, capture the Baltic states, Belarus, most of Ukraine, block Leningrad, capture the Crimea and reach the nearest approaches to Moscow, the Soviet Armed Forces were still able to overcome the most dangerous crisis. And having survived, they launched a counteroffensive, first near Tikhvin and Rostov, and on December 5 and near Moscow. As a result, the enemy's main strike groupings were defeated in all three strategic directions. With the transition of the Red Army to the general offensive, he was thrown back 150-400 km. However, the Soviet troops failed to consolidate and build on the success.

At the cost of emergency measures, the German command was able to restore the combat capability of its armed forces, increase their composition, including through the armies of partners in aggression, and already in the summer of 1942 launch a second powerful offensive, this time on the southern wing of the Soviet - German front. And again the Soviet

the troops suffered a heavy defeat: in the Crimea and near Kharkov, large forces, Sevastopol, were surrounded and defeated. Kerch, the southern regions of Donbass were in the hands of the enemy. And he, developing success, rushed to Voronezh, Stalingrad and the North Caucasus. There was a threat of its breakthrough into the Transcaucasus and further to the Middle East. The depth of the enemy invasion in the south reached 2,000 km. The Soviet Union lost a huge territory, which before the war was inhabited by 42% of the country's population and produced about a third of all industrial output. The retreating Soviet troops were exhausted to the limit. However, this time the enemy did not achieve his goals. His troops were even more drained of blood, stretched out on a huge front, stuck in Stalingrad and the North Caucasus, and as a result they themselves found themselves in a dangerous position. Thus, the German strategy, despite

The main directions of the development of military strategy during the war 263

initial success, again proved untenable. On the contrary, the Soviet military strategy was able not only to find a way out of a seemingly completely hopeless situation, but also to ensure the creation of a situation in which the successes achieved by the enemy eventually turned into a defeat for him.

The formation of a rational Soviet military strategy during this period was extremely contradictory and, to some extent, forced. Three times (at the beginning of the war, in the autumn of 1941, and also in the spring of 1942) a serious miscalculation was made in assessing the capabilities of the enemy and the direction of his main attack. So, before the start of the war, it was believed that he would concentrate his main efforts in the southwest, and the main blow was dealt to them in the western direction. In the autumn of 1941, it was assumed that the enemy would continue to deliver the main blow on the central (western) sector of the Soviet-German front, and he shifted his efforts to the south. In the spring of 1942, it was expected that the enemy would launch a decisive offensive in the western direction, while the German troops delivered the main blow in the south.

The attempts of the Soviet Supreme High Command in 1941 to restore the situation through counterattacks and numerous offensive operations did not justify themselves either. Poorly prepared and just as poorly conducted, they, in a number of cases, only complicated the situation. With serious mistakes, the defense was organized in the Baltic states, in the Kiev and Moscow directions. The favorable opportunities that were created as a result of the counteroffensive near Moscow and Stalingrad were not fully used either.

At the same time, the military strategy during this period managed to solve the problem of eliminating large gaps in the defense, holding important lines and areas, long-term defense of a number of key centers such as Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, Sevastopol, Stalingrad, formations and bringing large strategic reserves into battle. Its important achievement was the organization of a sudden transition from defense to a strategic offensive at the moment of the greatest weakening of the enemy's offensive potential. This created favorable conditions for inflicting new, even more powerful blows on the enemy. Unfortunately, this opportunity was not fully exploited, partly because of the lack of forces and miscalculations in the organization and conduct of operations, as well as because of the erroneous plan for the further conduct of the war adopted for the summer of 1942. In any case, the attempt in the spring of 1942 to switch to an offensive strategy ended in failure.

Once again, I had to return to the strategy of forced defense, but in a different version of it. This time, the basis of the strategic actions of the Soviet troops was the conduct of a mobile defense in the southwestern direction with the timely withdrawal of the main forces from the enemy's attack and the organization of a tough defense on the rear lines, the firm holding of the occupied lines on the rest of the Soviet-German front with the implementation in a number of sectors of offensive operations, carrying out a broader strategic maneuver by troops from other directions, maintaining and accumulating strategic reserves for inflicting a decisive blow on the enemy. This strategy justified itself.

In the second period of the war (from November 19, 1942 to the end of 1943), the military strategy of Germany was reduced mainly to attempts to take revenge and regain the strategic initiative, and when they failed, to transfer the war into positional forms. The Soviet military strategy that opposed it set the goal of achieving a radical change in the war, decisively changing its course in its favor. This goal was achieved in three stages, each of which constituted a special phase of the struggle for a radical change in the war.

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(November 1942) deputy: autumn campaign from July to December 1943 Directions of strikes of the Soviet wars in the winter Directions of counterattacks of the German fascist zones - campaigns from November 1942 to March 1943

The line of greatest advance of the Soviet wars in February 1943 (see sidebar)

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Scheme 38. The general course of hostilities in the second period of the Great Patriotic War (November 19, 1942 - December 1943)

The main directions of the development of military strategy during the war 265

At the first stage (in the winter of 1942/1943), the main goals of the strategic actions of the Soviet Armed Forces were: seizing and holding the strategic initiative, defeating the main grouping of enemy forces on the southern wing of the Soviet-German front, expanding the front of the strategic offensive from its spread to the southwestern, western and northwestern directions, the liberation of the Don, the North Caucasus, Donbass, the central regions of Russia, the elimination of the threat that still hung over Leningrad and Moscow.

The enemy's goal was to repel the Soviet counter-offensive, stabilize the front line and create conditions for the resumption of large-scale offensive operations.

At the second stage (in the summer of 1943), the strategic actions of the Soviet Armed Forces were based on the disruption of the third German strategic offensive near Kursk with a deliberate transition to a short-term defense and the deployment of a counteroffensive at first, and then a general offensive in the northwestern, western, southwest and south directions.

In contrast, Germany's strategy was to organize a major strategic offensive in the central sector of the Eastern Front with the subsequent development of success to the northeast, east and southeast, and after its failure, the intention to transfer the war into positional forms.

At the third stage (in the autumn and winter of 1943), the Soviet Union sought to disrupt this plan, and Germany tried in every possible way to hold the front and force the Soviet Armed Forces to abandon large-scale strategic offensive operations. In fact, the command of the Wehrmacht finally adopted an active defensive strategy based on a long war.

In the second period of the war, the Soviet Armed Forces conducted two military campaigns: in the winter of 1942/1943. - offensive, in the summer and autumn of 1943 - defensive-offensive, 2 strategic defensive, || strategic offensive, and in addition, a number of individual front-line and army operations.

This period began with the transition of the Soviet troops to the counteroffensive near Stalingrad. In the course of it, they seized the strategic initiative, surrounded and destroyed the 330,000-strong enemy grouping that broke through to the Volga, then defeated him in the Middle and Upper Don, liberated most of the North Caucasus, Donbass, and broke through the blockade of Leningrad. In 4 months the enemy was pushed back 500-600 km. He managed to stabilize the front only after an urgent transfer of reserves from the west and other sectors of the Eastern Front, as well as a counteroffensive near Kharkov and in the Donbass.

Although the victory at Stalingrad marked the beginning of a radical turning point in the war, the leadership of the Third Reich still did not give up hope of changing its course in their favor. As a result of the total mobilization of the human and material resources of Germany and the conquered territories, by the summer of 1943 he managed to significantly increase the combat power of the army operating on the Eastern Front and launch a third strategic offensive near Kursk. This plan, as mentioned above, was thwarted by the Soviet troops. The enemy strike groups were stopped in tactical depth, they were forced to retreat to their original position, and then leave the Oryol and Belgorod-Kharkov ledges, everywhere go over to a tough defense. This was the culminating moment in the development of a fundamental turning point in the war.

Using the success achieved, the Soviet Armed Forces from August to December 1943 carried out a number of successful offensive operations, during which the enemy was inflicted a new serious defeat, and most importantly, his

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an attempt to hold the defensive line created along the Dnieper - the so-called "Eastern Wall". In total, from November 1942 to December 1943, Soviet troops advanced 500–1300 km westward, reached the borders of the Baltic states, into the eastern regions of Belarus, entered the Right-Bank Ukraine, blocked the enemy in the Crimea.

The situation forced the German command to consistently move from an active offensive strategy to a tough defense strategy, and then to a containment strategy. At the same time, the Soviet side finally switched to a strategy of increasing offensive. Thus, a radical turning point in the war was completed.

A characteristic feature of strategic actions in that period was a sharp struggle for strategic initiative. German troops at least three times (in February, July and October 1943) tried to return it to their hands; sometimes they even managed to put individual Soviet fronts in a difficult position. But on the whole, the Soviet Supreme High Command itself dictated its will and the rules of war to the enemy.

For the first time since the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Armed Forces were then able to carry out operations to encircle and destroy large strategic enemy groupings, inflict powerful dissecting blows on him, and successively break through his defensive lines. At the same time, near Kursk, they created the most powerful defense in depth in the war, against which a major enemy offensive crashed.

From this, of course, it does not at all follow that there were no shortcomings in the strategic decisions and actions of the Soviet troops. As before, unrealistic tasks were often assigned to the fronts and armies, as a result of which the troops suffered unreasonably large losses. A serious miscalculation was made in assessing the situation and possible actions of the enemy in February and March 1943, when the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, and after it the commanders of the Voronezh and Southwestern fronts, believing that the German troops were retreating beyond the Dnieper, for a long time did not take the necessary measures to repel the strategic counteroffensive of the Wehrmacht in the Donbass and near Kharkov. All these miscalculations, of course, had the most negative impact, which delayed the achievement of a radical turning point in the war.

In the third period of the war (from January 1944 to May 1945), the basis of the military strategy of the USSR was the conduct of large-scale offensive operations along the entire front with successive and simultaneous strikes that increased in strength. Coordinated with the operations of the Anglo-American troops in Europe, they were aimed at the fastest withdrawal of Germany's allies from the war, the completion of the expulsion of the enemy from Soviet soil, the liberation of European countries from the German occupation, the complete defeat of the Wehrmacht and the victorious end of the war.

To this strategy, the Finnish leadership tried to oppose the strategy of prolonging the war in the hope of dissension in the anti-Hitler coalition and exhaustion of the Soviet Armed Forces through tough positional defense through the gradual reduction of the front line and the implementation of the barbaric tactics of "scorched earth" on the path of the offensive of the Soviet troops. .

The strategic actions of the Red Army during this period acquired the greatest scope. Three offensive campaigns were carried out and 1944, summer-autumn 1944 and the final campaign in Europe in 1945), and as part of them - 19 strategic operations.

An important event of this period was the opening of a second front in Europe. In conditions when Germany was forced to repel the offensive both in the East and in the West, the Soviet Armed Forces from the summer of 1944 inflicted a number of powerful

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Front line at the beginning of the third period of the war December 1943

The directions of the strikes of the Soviet military in the winter and kamganiya from late 1943 to May 12, 1944

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Scheme 39. The general course of hostilities in the third period of the Great Patriotic War (January 1944 - my 1945)

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worst blows. As a result, all of Belarus, most of the Baltic states, Right-Bank Ukraine, and Crimea were liberated. In several areas, Soviet troops reached the state border and transferred the fighting to the territory of Poland and Romania. In further operations, first Romania and then Finland were withdrawn from the war on the side of Nazi Germany. Soviet troops invaded East Prussia and Hungary.

In subsequent operations, Poland, Bulgaria, part of Czechoslovakia, and Austria were liberated. Soviet troops repelled enemy attempts to launch a counterattack in the area of Lake Balaton, crossed the Oder, captured all of East Prussia, Upper and Lower Silesia. And now the fighting unfolded in the central regions of Germany. Finally, in May 1945, under the blows of the Soviet troops and allied armies, the Third Reich capitulated. The war in Europe was over.

An important feature of the domestic military strategy during that period of the war was the fact that many operations were carried out by coalition groups of troops, i.e. with the participation of associations and formations of the Polish, Czechoslovak, Yugoslav, and later the Romanian and Bulgarian armies. At the same time, methods of conducting strategic, front-line and army operations received their further development. Their spatial scope increased, actions were mastered to storm large cities and conduct offensives in industrial regions. More boldly used strategic maneuver troops, forces and means.

Now the military strategy of the USSR already surpassed the military strategy of Germany in all respects, although we must give it its due: even in a hopeless situation, the German troops continued stubborn resistance.

From August 9 to September 2, 1945, the Soviet Armed Forces conducted another military campaign - in the Far East. Its goal was to eliminate the last hotbed of the Second World War, ensure the security of the eastern regions of the USSR and increase its influence on the countries of Asia. It was implemented by defeating in a short time almost a million Kwantung grouping of Japanese troops in Manchuria, North Korea and the Kuril Islands, which required:

- to carry out a strategic regrouping of troops, forces and assets from west to east on an unprecedented scale;
- to carry out the strategic deployment of three fronts, the Pacific Fleet, long-range and military transport aviation, three air defense armies and a strategic rear;
- to carry out the Manchurian strategic offensive operation on a front of more than 5 thousand km and to a depth of 600-800 km;
- to carry out the Kuril amphibious landing operation with the aim of capturing the Kuril Islands and South Sakhalin;
- to land several airborne assault forces to capture important administrative and military facilities in Manchuria and North Korea.

Hostilities began with a sudden transition of the Soviet troops to the offensive simultaneously in six converging directions. Building on their success, the 1st and 2nd Far Eastern Fronts, as well as the Trans-Baikal Fronts, relatively easily broke the resistance of the Kwantung Army, captured all the key points of Manchuria and forced the enemy to capitulate. The operation lasted only 25 days. At the same time, the average rate of advance of rifle troops was 35–40 km, and that of tank and mechanized formations, 70–90 km per day.

Characteristic of the national military strategy in solving these problems was the decisiveness of actions designed to quickly complete the entire campaign, strike at isolated areas, use most of the

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forces in the first echelon, the rapid advance of mobile groupings of troops in depth and their active operations in a significant separation from the main forces.

When conducting the operation, the Soviet troops creatively used the experience of the war on the Soviet-German front. At the same time, the special conditions of the Far Eastern theater of military operations were taken into account, very peculiar tasks were successfully solved, including such as breaking through powerful fortified areas on the border, developing

offensives in the mountainous and regions, the capture of island territories.

In general, during the years of the Great Patriotic War and the Second World War, the strategy of all participants acquired many new features in connection with the changed conditions of the struggle. In the general direction, the domestic military strategy also developed. But still, its improvement went, as always in Russia, along a special path. Throughout the war, it proceeded from the decisive importance of military operations, primarily on the land fronts, took into account the need for successive and simultaneous operations of all types, and attached particular importance to economic and moral factors in achieving victories. From campaign to campaign, its capabilities have constantly grown.

The German military strategy that opposed it was highly developed in its own way, and therefore extremely dangerous. But its opportunities have been declining year by year. It brought success in the fight against weak opponents and in a favorable environment, as it was distinguished by its utmost determination and audacity, but it turned out to be untenable in the war with the Soviet Union, since it was based on temporary, transient factors and included elements of adventurism.

As for the military strategy of the USA and Britain, it was built primarily on achieving overwhelming superiority in the air and at sea, followed by delivering final blows to the enemy on the continent.

All these factors, to one degree or another, manifested themselves in the military construction of various countries after the war.

2. Strategy for the construction and development of the Armed Forces during the war

One of the most important tasks of military strategy is to determine the expedient directions of military construction, primarily the development of effective ways to develop the armed forces.

During the war years, this task was constantly in the center of attention of the Soviet leadership. Moreover, it was solved purely concretely, taking into account the complex of socio-political and strategic tasks that actually arose before the country and the Armed Forces, the conditions of the situation and the possibilities of their military economy.

Throughout the war, the main strategic line in the development of the Armed Forces was to steadily increase their combat and moral potential, timely reorganize their structure in relation to the constantly changing conditions of armed struggle, and ensure the most favorable balance of forces and means with the enemy. As part of this, in certain periods of the war, special emphasis was placed on the predominant development of either defensive or offensive means, but in all cases - on the priority strengthening of armored forces and aviation. Great importance was also attached to increasing the fire, strike and maneuver capabilities of formations, and to improving the special forces and rear services.

In the development of the Armed Forces, five directions were considered decisive:

— establishment and maintenance of their optimal composition, its correlation between the active army and reserves;

- strengthening the technical equipment of the troops;

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— improvement of the management system and organizational structure;

- improving the quality characteristics of military personnel and combat training of the personnel of formations and units;

- steady increase in combat and moral potential.

From the very beginning, the war required a sharp, almost threefold increase in the total strength of the Armed Forces, primarily the active army, maintaining them at a certain level and in the required proportion, taking into account the composition of the enemy's armed forces, the length of the front line and the availability of military-trained reserves. So, if on June 22, 1941, there were 5,434,729 military personnel in the Red Army and Navy according to the list, then by the end of 1941 the number of the Armed Forces was already about 9.5 million people? Subsequently, it fluctuated between 10.5 million and 11.5 million people. On July 1945, according to the list, there were 11,390 thousand people in the Armed Forces of the USSR, 403.2 thousand people were in military formations of other departments who were on allowance in the People's Commissariat of Defense, and 1,046 thousand were treated in hospitals. man.

The active army included about half of the total strength of the Armed Forces. Its average monthly composition by years was: at the beginning of the war - 3,334 thousand; in 1941 - 3,024 thousand; in 1942 - 5,313 thousand; in 1943 - 6,389 thousand; - 6550 thousand and in 1945 - 6330 thousand people. The maximum size of the active army was in July-September 1943 - 6,816 thousand people'.

In the Armed Forces to make up for losses, natural loss of people, the creation of new formations to ensure active combat operations on the fronts, protect the Far Eastern and southern borders of the country, as well as to prepare marching replacements for the army in the internal military districts, additional 29,574.9 thousand people were called up during the war years. Thus, the total number of those put under arms (together with the personnel) amounted to 34,476.7 thousand people, or 17.7% of the total population of the country, which is more than half of the most active and able-bodied people. It goes without saying that such an outflow of those mobilized into the Armed Forces could not but cause enormous tension in the work of the national economy.

In Germany, the proportion of those drafted into the armed forces turned out to be even more significant. Yes, over the years

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War in the Third Reich, according to official data, 17,906 thousand people, or 61.3% of the entire male population, were mobilized? Such an overvoltage was not designed for a long war, and Germany was able to withstand it for a certain time only through the use of the slave labor of millions of people forcibly driven from the occupied territories.

Calculations and war practice show that the level of manpower involved in the Soviet Armed Forces was the maximum allowable. It not only ensured the maximum combat potential of the army in the field, but also made it possible to maintain high rates of military production, which is absolutely necessary for the successful conduct of the war.

To build up the strategic capabilities of the Armed Forces during the war years, the continuous increase in the quantitative and qualitative level of their technical equipment was of paramount importance. As new tanks, artillery guns, mortars, and other military equipment entered the active army in increasing quantities, the combat capabilities of the troops increased, conditions were created for setting and solving more complex tasks, using more effective methods of conducting operations and war as a whole.

A particularly sharp jump in the technical re-equipment of the army occurred from July [1942 to October 1943, when the transfer of the economy to a war footing was completed. Thus, the production of combat aircraft during this period increased on average by more than

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3 times, tanks - more than 5 times, guns and mortars - almost 4 times. Since that time, the Soviet Union has significantly surpassed Germany in terms of the average annual production of military equipment and weapons: the Soviet industry produced 2 times more field artillery guns, 5 times more mortars, 2.6 times more anti-tank guns, 1.5 times more more combat aircraft and 1.5-2 times more tanks. If the German military industry in 1942 produced 6,200, and in 1943 - 10,700 tanks and assault guns, then the Soviet industry gave its Armed Forces over the years, respectively, 24,400 and 24,100 combat vehicles.

The fact that the number of weapons and military equipment has increased rapidly since 1942 is evidenced by the data in Table 4.

Table 4 Quantity of the main military equipment and weapons in the Red Army by years of war".

By condition| Name | Tanks and self-propelled guns, | Guns and mortars*,| Combat self-thousand units. Thousand PC. years, thousand pieces On 06/22/1941] | total 22.6 76.5 20.0 incl. in the current a 14.2 32.9 9.2 As of 01/01/1942 | total 7.7 48.6 12.0 incl. in the active army 2.2 30.0 5.4 As of January 1, 1943 20.6 161.6 21.9 incl. in the active army 8.1 91.4 12.3 As of 01/01/1944 | total 24.4 244.4 32.5 incl. in the active army 5.8 101.4 13.4 As of 01/01/1945 | total 35.4 244.4 43.3 incl. in action 83 114.6 21.5 As of 05/09/1945 | total 35.2 239.6 47.3 incl. in the active army 8.1 94.4 22.3

It should be noted, however, that since 1942, as can be seen from the table, the active army has had only 23-39% of tanks, 39-60% of guns and mortars, and 41-56% of combat aircraft. The rest were placed in formations and formations of the internal military districts, in the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, as well as in the Far East, Central Asia and Transcaucasia.

The number of military equipment in the active army was constantly changing. In 1942, compared with 1941], due to the losses incurred and a sharp decrease in the rate of military production, it decreased by 1.3-6.5 times, but then, starting from 1943 to 1945. increased respectively for tanks - 2.6-3.8 times, for artillery and mortars - 3-3.8 times, for combat aircraft - 2.3-4 times. At the same time, the number of new equipment increased by 7-10 times. In the last years of the war,

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* Without 50mm mortars.

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The equipment of the troops of the active army with weapons and military equipment was maintained at a more or less stable level, but by the end of each major operation, it fell sharply for some time.

Since 1942, the quality of armaments has been continuously improved. Moreover, in this area there was a sharp struggle between the USSR and Germany. It became especially acute in 1943, primarily in armored vehicles. During the war years, 62 models of tanks and self-propelled guns were newly created, tested and modernized in the Soviet Union. The share of new vehicles in the tank fleet of the active army exceeded 80% by the end of the war. In the second period of the war, in contrast to the tanks "Tiger", "Panther" and assault guns "Ferdinand" that appeared in the hands of the enemy, the modernized medium tank T-34-85, self-propelled guns SU-122, SU -152, and in the third period - heavy tanks IS-2 and IS-3, medium tank T-44. Their number grew rapidly.

Artillery developed rapidly. The vast majority of new types of artillery pieces and about half of the models of small arms that were in service with the Soviet troops by the end of the war were created and put into mass production during the war years. In increasing quantities, the army received new systems of mortars, rocket, anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery. Caliber tank and

and tank artillery increased by almost 2 times, and the armor penetration of shells increased by about 5 times.

A sharp qualitative leap was achieved in the development of aviation. During the war years, 25 new types of combat aircraft and 23 types of new aircraft engines were created and put into production. New types of aircraft began to form the basis of the aviation fleet: MiG-3, Yak-3, Yak-7, Yak-9, La-5, La-7 fighters, Pe-2, Tu-2 bombers, Il-2 attack aircraft and IL-10. Ground attack aviation developed especially rapidly: its share increased from 4.5% to 26-31%. Moreover, if in the first years of the war the majority of Soviet aircraft were inferior to the German ones in terms of flight performance, then at the end of the war this discrepancy was eliminated.

As a result of the colossal efforts of the rear, the quantitative and qualitative balance of forces since 1943 in almost all types of weapons and military equipment has changed in favor of the Soviet Armed Forces. Already in the summer of this year, Soviet troops outnumbered the enemy by 1.7 times in tanks, almost 2 times in artillery and mortars, and 3.4 times in combat aircraft. In the future, this superiority became even more significant: 3-7-fold.

The situation with the provision of troops with ammunition has also changed. Their production increased rapidly, but the production of 57-mm, 76-mm, 152-mm and 203-mm shells, M-13 and M-31 rocket mines increased especially. Mastering the production of new types of ammunition made it possible to significantly increase the power of fire impact on the enemy. In general, during the years of the war, only the Ground Forces and aviation used up more than 8 million tons of shells, mines and bombs, or 1.3 times more than the enemy. "And this became a strategic factor.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the strategic actions of the Armed Forces, their organizational development was of paramount importance. From the very beginning of the war, there was an active search for more expedient organizational structures, an optimal system of command and control of troops, and the direction of resolving these issues changed more than once.

In the first period of the war, for example, the main task was to rebuild the Armed Forces in the shortest possible time, taking into account the losses incurred, the growing scope of the armed struggle, the lack of military equipment and weapons, the required number of well-trained command personnel at the operational-tactical level, and the solution of defensive tasks. The essence of the reorganization was

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larger formations and formations - from the front to the division with a reduction in the number and simplification of their organizational structure, which made it easier to manage them with insufficiently experienced command staff and staffs and made it possible to increase the number of these formations.

As a result of the reorganization, by the end of 1942, the number of fronts in the active army increased by almost 2.5 times - from 5 to 12. The number of army formations increased rapidly. At the beginning of the war, there were only 14 combined-arms armies in the active fronts, to | December - 49, and a year later - 67 combined arms, 2 tank and || air armies. By the middle of 1943, their number reached its maximum - 69 combined arms, 5 tank and 13 air armies⁹. In large numbers, formations of military branches were formed. The number of calculated rifle, tank and cavalry divisions tripled by the end of 1942 - from 171 to 5142. All this allowed the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command and the command of the fronts to more quickly maneuver, respond to changes in the situation and create the necessary groupings of troops.

At the same time, the combat capabilities of the reorganized fronts, armies and divisions were reduced. In a number of cases, the newly created fronts were inferior to the pre-war army formations, and taking into account the reduction in the number of divisions, the armies corresponded approximately to the pre-war rifle corps. In addition, the average staffing of many formations in 1942 - early 1943. did not exceed 50% of the standard. Rifle divisions rarely had more than 5.5 thousand people in their composition?

There was also an acute issue with the provision of troops, both those that fought on the fronts and those that were just being formed and equipped with weapons and military equipment, trained personnel, but especially trained officers.

In essence, during the course of the war, two different systems of manning the active army were tested for effectiveness. The Soviet system was opposed by the German principle of organizational building. The number of divisions in the Wehrmacht by the end of 1942 increased to only 266, i.e. 1.4 times, thanks to which their staffing was maintained at a level close to the standard one, which ensured their superiority over Soviet divisions in terms of combat capabilities by 2.5 -3 times or more. The number of army groups and armies increased by only 20-26%??.

With the invariance of the German principle of manning the active army, the direction of organizational construction in the Red Army underwent changes during the war. From the end of 1942, a course was taken to strengthen the combat strength of the fronts, armies and divisions, the formation of large tank, mechanized formations and formations, the deployment of artillery divisions, and then artillery corps, anti-tank brigades, formations and units of special forces. This made it possible to raise the operational-combat independence of the fronts and armies, set them more ambitious tasks, and conduct large-scale operations with decisive goals.

Throughout the war, the staffing of command and control agencies and troops with experienced personnel remained an exceptionally difficult and important problem. Its solution was largely complicated by the enormous damage inflicted by unjustified mass repressions in the late 30s in relation to military personnel, the large scale of the armed struggle and the increase in the number of military formations in the Armed Forces, large losses, especially in the first two years of war, in military personnel. For 1941-1942

irreversible losses in the officer corps exceeded half the losses of officers during the entire war. In 1941 alone, the active army and navy lost 203,083 officers, in 1942 - 286,345

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officers, of which about 5,500 were battalion and division commanders, 16,000 were company commanders, and 125,000 were platoon commanders. In 1942, 11 corps commanders, 76 division commanders, and 16 brigade commanders were also killed?

The State Defense Committee and the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command were forced to take urgent measures to make up for the shortage of officers in the troops and to sharply raise the professional level of the commanding officers of the army in the field. Until the end of 1941, about 75% of reserve officers were drafted into the army and navy. In connection with the increased demand for command personnel, the entire system of their training was reorganized. From the first months of the war, all academies and schools, as well as courses and schools created in the fronts and in the armies, switched to accelerated training of officers. During the first six months of the war, more than 192,000 commanders for all types of troops were trained in academies, schools, advanced training courses for command personnel, front-line and army junior lieutenant courses.

In 1942, in order to speed up the training of military personnel and eliminate their shortage, 24 additional military schools were created. Thanks to these measures, during this year the army and navy received more than 564,000 officers* from military educational institutions. By the beginning of 1944, more than 30 higher military educational institutions, 220 military schools, more than 200 different schools and courses were engaged in the training of command, political and engineering personnel, which annually provided the Armed Forces with almost 500 thousand officers? In total, during the war years, military educational institutions trained about 2 million officers."

An important source of replenishment of command personnel was the promotion to officer positions of soldiers, sergeants and foremen who distinguished themselves in battles. During the war, 267 thousand people received primary officer ranks from among them? In general, as early as October 1943, it was possible not only to meet the needs of the army in command personnel, but also to create large reserves for all branches of the Armed Forces and combat arms. In the same autumn, 93,500 officers with combat experience and the necessary military-theoretical training were in the reserve of the fronts and armies. At the same time, it became possible to transfer a significant part of the command and engineering staff to the reserve. In 1943, more than 200,000 officers were in the reserve. From January to October 1943, the general staff of the Armed Forces doubled and the echelon of the highest command staff noticeably stabilized?! But, of course, the main thing was that over time, command cadres gained combat experience, mastered the art of command and control, and steadily improved their military skills.

During the war years, all types of the Armed Forces and branches of the TROOPS developed in a balanced way.

The ground forces, being the main and most numerous branch of the Armed Forces, bore the brunt of the armed struggle and carried out the main part of the strategic and operational tasks. By November 1942, they included 88.4% of the personnel?, the bulk of military equipment and weapons. All other branches of the Armed Forces acted in their interests.

The ground forces included rifle troops, artillery, armored and mechanized troops, cavalry, as well as special troops: airborne, engineering, communications, chemical protection, automobile and road.

The main direction of their development was to increase the impact and firepower, increase maneuverability.

The main operational formation of the Ground Forces was the combined arms army, and the main tactical formation was the rifle division. Their

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the leading role throughout the war remained unchanged, although the structure and composition were repeatedly changed.

On the main axes, combined-arms armies at the very beginning of the war, as a rule, included 2-4 rifle corps, a mechanized corps, and a set of army units. But already a few weeks later, due to heavy losses, the composition of the armies was reduced, the corps directorates were liquidated, some army parts.

Then the armies were somewhat strengthened, but they never reached the pre-war level. In the first half of 1942, standard combined-arms armies usually consisted of 5-8, in some up to [0 divisions and more,]-3 separate tank brigades, army artillery, engineering and other special units. The average size of the army most often did not exceed 30-60 thousand people. It was armed with at best 50-150 tanks, 600-1000 guns and mortars.

In subsequent years, the composition of the armies continued to grow. In 1943, the corps control unit was restored. After that, the army usually included 2-3 rifle corps (6-9 divisions), cannon, anti-tank, mortar and anti-aircraft artillery regiments. At the end of the war, a typical general military army most often included 3-4 rifle corps (about 12 divisions), 3-4 artillery and mortar regiments or an artillery brigade, a separate tank regiment, an engineering brigade, and a number of other special units. stay. In offensive operations, the army operating in the main direction received, as a rule, 1-2 tank or mechanized corps, an artillery breakthrough division, and other troops for reinforcement. This composition allowed her to maintain survivability for 15–25 days." Thereby

Significant development in the composition of the Ground Forces was received by rifle troops, which were the most numerous of their branches of service (more than 70% of the number of personnel). They also bore the brunt of the armed struggle. The main tactical unit of the rifle troops was the rifle division. During the war years, their number constantly increased. If by the beginning of the war there were 198 of them, then by the end of 1941, due to the formation of new formations, there were 384 of them, and by the middle of 1942 - already 426 divisions. The staffing and structure of the divisions changed several times. In 1942, for example, three states acted at once: December 1941, March and July 1942. Along with the rifle divisions in 1941, as a forced, temporary measure to more quickly replenish the army with new trained reserves, they began to create rifle brigades with a staff strength of 4,356 to 6,000 people. They had a simpler organization and, in comparison with divisions, required much less time, military equipment and artillery weapons for their formation. At the same time, motorized rifle, airborne and ski brigades, marine brigades were created. By the end of 1941 there were 200 such brigades, by May 1942 - 214, in the active army, respectively, 83 and 121 brigades.

However, as early as next year, brigades that had weak firepower and striking power began to gradually reorganize into rifle divisions. During the year, 83 rifle divisions with a staffing strength of 9,435 people were reorganized from rifle brigades and other formations and re-formed. At the same time, the staff of the Guards Rifle Division, numbering 10,670 men, was introduced. True, as before, divisions almost never had such numbers in practice; in 1942-1944. only a quarter of them had about 8 thousand people. IN

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the rest numbered from 5,000 to 7,000, and those 3-4,000*. Nevertheless, as a result of an increase in the number of automatic small arms and artillery and mortar weapons, even with a smaller number of people, their firepower is significantly increased: the weight of an artillery and mortar volley by December 1944 increases from 548 to 589 kg, as of June 1945 - up to 2,040 kg.

A certain role in the war was played by such a previously classical branch of the Ground Forces as the cavalry. Cavalry formations (divisions and corps), reinforced with tanks, artillery, and even under air cover, showed themselves in the best possible way in a number of battles. They carried out deep raids behind enemy lines and were used in areas where the use of tanks was difficult. However, as the war progressed, the role of the cavalry as a fighting force gradually declined. Its numbers were reduced due to its great vulnerability to small arms and artillery fire, air and tank strikes, and also because of its low maneuverability, which could not be compared with tank and mechanized formations. Difficulties in replenishing the cavalry with horsemen also played an important role. By the autumn of 1943, the number of cavalry divisions was reduced from 82 to 26, and cavalry corps from 17 to 8%.

The remaining cavalry formations were used mainly as part of cavalry-mechanized groups, intended to solve the problems of developing a breakthrough in enemy defenses in front-line (sometimes army) offensive operations, mainly in conditions of wooded-marshy, mountainous and mountainous desert terrain. In a word, the dispute between the horse and the tank, which began during the First World War, ended in favor of the latter. After the war, the cavalry as a branch of service was generally abolished.

During the war years, armored and mechanized troops, the main strike force of the Ground Forces, were intensively developed. Their technical base consisted of tanks, self-propelled artillery mounts and motorization equipment. The number of armored vehicles in the active army increased rapidly: | January 1942, there were 2.2 thousand tanks, on | January 1943 - 8.1 thousand, on | January 1945 - 8.3 thousand tanks and self-propelled guns. The main direction in the development of armored forces was to increase their firepower, survivability and mobility, the formation of large tank formations and formations.

Since the spring of 1942, with the growth of tank production, instead of separate divisions, brigades and battalions, tank corps began to be created for offensive operations. According to the states in 1942, they had 3 tank and motorized rifle brigades, in total about 8 thousand people and 168 tanks*. At the same time, the first tank armies of mixed composition are being formed. Typically, such an army consisted of 2-3 tank corps and 1-2 rifle divisions, which enabled it to independently break through the defense and develop success in depth, and deliver strong counterattacks in the defense. In the autumn, the mechanized corps, disbanded in 1941 due to heavy losses in tanks, began to be restored, consisting of 3 mechanized and one tank brigades with a staff strength of 13.5 thousand people, 175 tanks and about 100 guns and mortars. By the end of that year, the active army already had 2 tank armies of mixed composition, more than 30 tank and mechanized corps*. At the same time, the number of tank brigades and heavy breakthrough tank regiments, which were the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, was increasing, which it attached to rifle divisions for use as tanks for direct infantry support.

At the beginning of 1943, another important qualitative turn took place in the development of armored and mechanized troops, which had a great influence on the methods of strategic actions of the Armed Forces. At a meeting held in January

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The GKO Research Institute decided to form tank armies of uniform composition (two tank and mechanized corps, artillery and special units, logistic units)*4. The creation of such armies gave the Supreme High Command a powerful means of actively influencing the development of strategic

operations, which in turn gave these operations new features.

Armored and mechanized troops reached their highest development in 1944-1945. Increased strength, especially in tanks (in armies by 1.9 times) and artillery (in armies by 1.5 times, in corps by 2–2.7 times)", allowed tank formations and formations to solve tasks independently in operational depth. At the beginning of 1945, the active fronts included 6 tank armies, 21 | separate tank and mechanized corps, a significant number of separate tank and self-propelled artillery brigades and regiments*.

The saturation of the army with tanks and self-propelled guns, the creation of large tank (mechanized) formations and formations significantly increased the strike power and maneuverability of the Ground Forces, made it possible to carry out operations with decisive goals, to great depths and at a high pace. Armored and mechanized troops have become the means of most effective solution of the most important operational tasks.

The development of artillery was of great importance for building up the strategic capabilities of the troops and increasing their firepower. If at the end of 1941 the active army had 30 thousand guns and mortars, then by the end of 1943 - 101.4 thousand, and in January 1945 - 114.6 thousand * 7 The qualitative improvement of artillery was achieved by modernization of existing systems and creation of new ones.

Almost half of the guns of all types during the war years were improved or developed anew. As a result, its range and rate of fire increased significantly, the power of shells increased, and the proportion of cannon, rocket and anti-tank artillery, guns and mortars of large caliber increased. The transfer of artillery to mechanical traction dramatically increased its maneuverability. In 1942, new 76-mm (divisional) guns entered service, in 1943 - a 76-mm (regimental) gun, a 152-mm (hull) howitzer, and in 1944 - a 100-mm (field) gun. Modernization of 82-mm, 120-mm and the creation of 160-mm mortars have significantly increased the capabilities of this type of weapon.

The largest achievement in the development of artillery was the development, mass production and widespread use of rocket launchers - "Katyushas". This qualitatively new type of artillery—reactive—had no equal in its combat capabilities, efficiency, and scale of use in any of the foreign armies. Multiple charges, high fire performance, the possibility of simultaneously hitting targets over large areas in addition to surprise, high material and moral efficiency of influencing the enemy - these are its most important qualities. During the war, the high-explosive and fragmentation action of shells, the accuracy and range of fire increased significantly.

But, of course, in terms of strategy, it was not this that played a decisive role, but the formation of large artillery formations of the reserve of the Supreme High Command - artillery divisions and breakthrough corps, numbering, respectively, 364-1,576 guns, mortars and launchers of rocket artillery, cannon artillery - artillery divisions (248 guns) and anti-aircraft artillery divisions (88 guns), rocket artillery divisions (volley weighing about 320 tons) and anti-tank artillery brigades (up to 72 guns). By the end of 1943, the Ground Forces included 6 artillery corps and 26 breakthrough divisions, 7 divisions of guards mortars of the VGK reserve. From August 1944, the formation of 4 more artillery corps and 11 breakthrough divisions began. By the beginning of 1945 they had

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105 artillery divisions of various types, 147 separate artillery, anti-tank, mortar brigades and rocket artillery brigades. By the end of the war, the number of artillery reserve VGK increased by 9 times. The weight of her volley was 5.2 times the weight of a volley of military artillery*. This allowed the Supreme High Command to create powerful artillery groupings in important strategic and operational areas, reliably solve the problem of breaking through the enemy's defenses and rapidly developing tactical success into operational success.

The development of the airborne troops proceeded differently. Judging by pre-war views, they were assigned a very important role in the development of operations. With this in mind, in April 1941, 5 airborne corps of a three-brigade composition, 10 thousand people each, began to be created. However, they did not have time to complete their formation. The outbreak of war and the most difficult conditions in which the Red Army found itself forced the Soviet command to use all 5 airborne corps as conventional rifle formations.

In January and February 1942, the 4th Airborne Corps and the 1st Airborne Brigade of the 5th Airborne Corps, reinforced by a separate rifle regiment, carried out the Vyazemsky airborne operation, the purpose of which was to assist the troops Western and Kalinin fronts in the encirclement and defeat of Army Group Center. But due to the lack of experience and a number of miscalculations made by the Soviet command, the airborne units suffered heavy losses and only partially completed their tasks.

After this failure, the landing of airborne troops on such a large scale was not carried out for a long time. Nevertheless, by the beginning of 1943, 10 guards airborne divisions and an airborne brigade were in the Armed Forces ready to participate in the upcoming offensive operations. However, the current situation again forced the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command to use them as ordinary rifle formations. In the spring of 1943, they were transferred to the rifle troops, and instead of them, 20 guards airborne brigades were formed.

Some of them in September of the same year were used in the Dnieper airborne operation. Although by their active actions they pulled back significant enemy forces, the final result of their landing was, nevertheless, small, against any expectation. In 1945, airborne units were used in the Manchurian strategic operation. That's where they were very successful.

showing all the effectiveness and prospects of their application. But at the same time, the specifics of the theater of operations and the development of events during the operation were of decisive importance.

Of the special troops, the engineer troops played the most responsible role. From a tactical means, they turned into troops of operational-strategic importance, ensuring the creation of a solid defense, breaking through enemy defensive zones, forcing water barriers and operational maneuver of troops. The variety of tasks performed by engineering troops during the war years necessitated a continuous increase in their combat capabilities. This required an improvement in the organizational structure and strengthening of their technical equipment. In 1941-1942. As part of the Armed Forces, 10 sapper armies were created, whose task was to prepare rear defensive lines of national importance in the western and southwestern directions. However, with the transition of the Soviet troops to offensive operations, the need for such armies disappeared and they were disbanded. Some of their formations were placed at the disposal of the fronts, and some were reorganized into formations of engineering troops of the reserve.

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VGK rates. Since 1943, separate brigades (engineer-sapper, engineer-mine, pontoon-bridge), as well as engineer-tank and motorized pontoon-bridge regiments, began to form the basis of the organizational structure of the engineering troops. Qualitatively new formations were created, such as assault engineer-sapper and motorized engineer-assault brigades of the Headquarters reserve, designed to solve a wide variety of tasks in engineering support for breaking through heavily fortified defensive lines and areas of the enemy. In addition to sapper battalions, they included units and subunits for demolition of bunkers, reconnaissance, knapsack flamethrowers, tanks with minesweeps, flamethrower tanks and a light crossing fleet.

In total, by the end of 1943, the engineering troops included 58 brigades, 9 regiments, more | thousand battalions for various purposes, which made it possible to improve the engineering support of the ground forces in all types of combat operations. Subsequently, the development of the engineering troops went in the direction of strengthening the combined arms associations with engineering units and subunits. During the war, the number of battalions increased by almost 5 times, and there was a clear trend towards an increase in the role of engineering units and formations of the reserve of the Supreme High Command, which by the end of the war accounted for about 25% of all engineering troops.

In order to improve command and control of troops, from the very beginning of the war, special attention was paid to the development of signal troops. Their numerical strength during the war increased by more than 4 times. All connections and communication units were equipped with new technology, received at their disposal more advanced telephone and telegraph equipment, new radio stations and other means. At the same time, their organizational restructuring was carried out. First of all, she touched on the communications troops of the highest level. The fact is that already the first days of the war revealed major shortcomings in providing communications between the Headquarters of the Civil Code, the General Staff and the fronts. Serious difficulties also arose in the organization of communications at the operational level of command, especially after the liquidation of the corps level. That is why it was necessary to form a large number of new units and communications units of front and army subordination. Until the end of 194] more than | thousand linear, cable-pole, repair and restoration and other parts??. By the end of the next year, the total number of signal regiments had almost quadrupled, signal battalions—five times, and radio divisions—more than doubled?3.

In the second period of the war, the need arose to provide communications for the operational groups of the General Staff with the fronts. From May to August 1943, the formation of separate signal divisions of the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command and special-purpose communication centers began to provide communication between its representatives and the General Staff and headquarters of the fronts. At the same time, stronger communications units began to be created in the fronts, in the combined arms and tank armies, and at the strategic level, separate communications brigades of the Headquarters reserve.

On the whole, the Ground Forces underwent serious changes during the years of the war, reaching a high degree of development and significantly increasing their combat power. The share of armored troops in their composition increased from 4.4 to | 1.5%, reserve artillery of the Headquarters of the High Command — from 12.6 to 20.7%. At the same time, the share of infantry troops decreased from 68.4% to 62.2%, and of cavalry from 4.8% to 3%5. The main types of troops were equipped with new, more effective weapons, which ensured military and technical superiority over the enemy. The saturation of the Ground Forces with armored and auto-tractor vehicles marked the beginning of the convergence of rifle and tank formations in terms of strike, fire and maneuver capabilities. It's full

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stuy corresponded to the changed nature of the war and the new methods of conducting strategic and front-line operations.

During the war years, the Air Force was regarded as the second most important branch of the Armed Forces. Not a single major operation was carried out without their participation. On the offensive, they covered the troops of the fronts from the air, supported the combined-arms and tank armies in breaking through the defenses and exploiting success, in the defense they defeated the enemy's strike groups, destroyed his approaching reserves, and assisted the ground troops in every possible way in holding defensive lines. The Air Force played the main role in the fight against German aircraft and in gaining air supremacy, inflicting strikes on objects of the operational and strategic rear of the enemy. They were widely used for aerial reconnaissance, the transfer of troops and cargo, and assistance to partisans.

Before the start of the war, the Soviet Air Force had more than 20 thousand aircraft, of which almost 9 thousand were part of the western military districts. The figure, of course, is huge, but still it should be recognized that most of the aircraft fleet is outdated or was out of order. In addition, literally in the first hours of the war, those aviation forces,

which could not be taken out from under the blow of the Luftwaffe, suffered heavy losses. The Soviet Air Force found itself in an extremely difficult position. By the end of 1941, the Armed Forces had lost 17,900 combat aircraft, and air supremacy passed to the enemy for a long time. It was possible to radically change the situation in their favor only after 1.5-2 years.

This circumstance, as well as the very nature of the war, required a serious restructuring of the Air Force, a revision of a number of principles for their construction. At the beginning of the war, Soviet aviation had a rather complex and branched structure, which did not justify itself. It was subdivided into aviation of the High Command (long-range bomber), front-line (Front Air Force), army (Army Air Force) and military (corps squadrons). Such a dispersal of it in conditions of heavy losses was simply unacceptable, since the war required a decisive massing of aviation in the most important sectors of the front. In this regard, already in August 1941, by the decision of the GKO, major organizational measures were taken in the Air Force: the directorates of the aviation corps were abolished; the number of air regiments was reduced in the air divisions of frontline aviation (to two); in regiments, the number of aircraft was reduced from 60-63 to 32-33, and then to 20 units. At the same time, the formation of reserve, and then strike aviation groups of the reserve of the Headquarters of the High Command began. It was recognized as the most expedient to reduce the entire fleet of aircraft in the fronts into air armies.

In March 1942, long-range aviation, withdrawn from the Air Force, was transformed into long-range aviation (ADD), subordinated directly to the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. It included 7 bomber air divisions, a transport aviation division and a reserve aviation brigade, and by the beginning of 1945 it had increased to 17 air divisions and from 273 to 1,355 aircraft."

The middle of 1942 became a turning point in the development of the Air Force, as the formation of large operational formations of front-line aviation, the air armies, began. Thanks to this, it became possible to centrally control aviation, mass its forces in decisive directions, successfully fight for air supremacy, and conduct large-scale air operations to carry out important strategic missions.

During the war years, 17 air armies of front-line aviation were formed, and then an air army of long-range aviation. Over time, some armies were again disbanded or, conversely, united. By the end of the war, 13 air armies of front-line aviation remained in the Armed Forces**. Their fight

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The composition of the troops changed depending on the situation and the nature of the tasks performed by the fronts. Usually, the air army included several fighter, attack and bomber air divisions (sometimes air corps), as well as a number of separate aviation units. Each front, as a rule, had one air army, but there were cases when two air armies entered the front, as was the case, for example, during the liberation of the North Caucasus in 1943.

For the period of strategic offensive operations, the air armies of the fronts operating in the main directions were often reinforced by air corps and divisions from the Stavka reserve. The latter began to be created in the autumn of 1942 and soon became in the hands of the Stavka a powerful means of aviation maneuver. By the beginning of 1945, 30 corps and 27 separate divisions had been formed.

The quantitative and qualitative composition of the air armies steadily increased. So, if in 1942-1943. they usually had from 200 to | thousand aircraft, then in 1944-1945. their number has become much larger - about 1.5 thousand, and in individual operations (taking into account the reinforcement) - 2.5-3 thousand aircraft.

The number of aviation formations and units increased rapidly along with the total composition of the aviation fleet. By the end of the war, there were already 155 aviation divisions in the active army, and the aviation fleet had grown 4 times. If, for example, by the end of 194] the active army had only 5.4 thousand combat aircraft, then by the end of the next year their number increased to 12.3 thousand, by the end of 1943 - up to 13.4 thousand, the end of 1944 - up to 21.5 thousand. In May 1945, there were 22.3 thousand combat aircraft in the army.

In general, the quantitative and qualitative growth of the Air Force, the expansion of their combat capabilities were one of the main factors that contributed to the development of the domestic military strategy and the achievement of victory in the war.

During the war years, the country's air defense troops (Air Defense) were the main means of covering large administrative, political and economic centers and military facilities of the country, the main groupings of the Armed Forces and the most important communications from German air strikes. Together with the Air Force, they fought for air supremacy and took an active part in all defensive and offensive operations.

At the beginning of the war, the Air Defense Forces consisted of air defense zones, which were considered operational formations, and therefore were subordinate to the commanders of the respective military districts. The composition of the air defense zones depended on the importance of the objects being covered. As a rule, the air defense zone included separate air defense corps, divisions and brigades, as well as operationally subordinate formations of the Air Force fighter aviation, anti-aircraft machine gun, searchlight regiments and battalions, regiments and battalions of barrage balloons, units of air surveillance, warning and communications (VNOS). By June 1941, the Air Defense Forces were armed with about 3,330 medium (76 mm and 85 mm) and 330 small (37 mm) caliber anti-aircraft guns, 650 machine guns, | 500 searchlights, 850 balloons. The Air Force had about 1,500 fighter aircraft, the crews of which were trained to conduct combat operations in the air defense system.

However, already in the first month of the war, especially with the beginning of massive enemy strikes against large cities, the weakness of the entire air defense system became clear. The biggest omission in it was revealed - decentralized control of air defense forces and means, and as a result, the necessary

reliability of warning about an air enemy, difficulties arose with the organization of maneuver, etc.

In this regard, already in November 1941, by decision of the State Defense Committee, a radical reorganization of the entire anti-aircraft system was carried out.

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stuffy defense of the country. The formations and air defense units withdrawn from the control of the military districts were placed at the disposal of the commander of the country's Air Defense Forces. This was followed by the division of air defense into air defense of the country's territory and air defense of troops. In the European part of the USSR, the air defense zones were disbanded, and on their basis the Moscow and Leningrad air defense corps areas, as well as 13 divisional areas, were deployed. From January 1942, fighter aviation was placed under the command of the commander of the Air Defense Forces of the country, which until now had been performing the tasks of covering objects throughout the territory. All this contributed to the strengthening of air defense, increasing its reliability and effectiveness.

The course towards centralization and enlargement of anti-aircraft defense formations and formations continued in the future. In April and May 1942, the Moscow Air Defense Front and the first two air defense armies, Leningrad and Baku, were created. At the same time, some divisional air defense areas were transformed into corps ones.

With the transition of the Armed Forces to large-scale offensive operations, another reorganization of the air defense is being carried out. First of all, measures are being taken to strengthen the cover of troops and objects of the rear of the fronts, organize air defense of the liberated areas and improve the air defense system of large cities in the depths of the country. To this end, in 1943, the command of the commander of the Air Defense Forces of the country was abolished, and the leadership of the air defense was entrusted to the commander of the artillery of the Red Army. The air defense forces of the country are divided into Western and Eastern air defense fronts with a dividing line between them along the Arkhangelsk-Kostroma-Krasnodar-Sochi line. The troops of the Western Front of Air Defense were to carry out air defense of Murmansk, Leningrad, Moscow, the Central Industrial Region, as well as front-line facilities and communication lines. It includes the Special Moscow Air Defense Army, 11 air defense corps and divisional areas, as well as 14 air defense fighter aircraft formations. The troops of the Eastern Air Defense Front are tasked with air defense of the most important regions of the Urals, the Middle and Lower Volga, the Caucasus and Transcaucasia. It consisted of the Transcaucasian air defense zone, 7 air defense corps and divisional areas, 8 fighter aviation formations.

Finally, in 1944, i.e., at the final stage of the war, the third reorganization of air defense was carried out. The Western and Eastern Air Defense Fronts are transformed into the Northern and Southern Air Defense Fronts, and at the end of the year, into the Western and Southwestern Air Defense Fronts. In addition, the Transcaucasian Air Defense Front is being formed. The Special Moscow Air Defense Army is being deployed to the Central Air Defense Front. Corps and divisional air defense areas are reorganized into air defense corps and divisions. At the same time, the Central Headquarters of the Air Defense Forces of the Red Army was formed.

In total, by the end of the war, the Air Defense Forces of the country had 4 fronts, 6 armies (including 1 air), 19 corps (including 4 aviation), 42 divisions (including 24 aviation) and 5 separate air defense brigades. They were armed with about 3.2 thousand aircraft, 18.7 thousand anti-aircraft guns, 5.4 thousand anti-aircraft searchlights, 1.4 thousand balloons and other equipment. Thus, in the course of the war, the Air Defense Forces of the country acquired the features of an independent branch of the Armed Forces, were able to reliably repel enemy air strikes, and conduct large-scale anti-aircraft operations.

The Navy, in close cooperation with the Ground Forces, Air Defense Forces and Air Force, solved major operational and operational-tactical tasks in maritime theaters and coastal areas, conducted active combat operations to destroy enemy fleet forces and transports, provided cover for military and national economic sea, lake and river transportation, contributed

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coastal groupings of troops in defensive and offensive operations. One of the important tasks of the fleet was to provide external communications that connected the northern ports of the country with the ports of the allies in the anti-Hitler coalition. The Navy played an important role in holding, together with the Ground Forces, coastal bridgeheads and naval bases. The sailors took an active part in offensive and defensive operations of troops in coastal areas. About 500,000 sailors and officers fought heroically as part of the Ground Forces.

By the beginning of the war, the Navy included 4 fleets - the Northern, Baltic, Black Sea, Pacific, as well as the Caspian sea and three river flotillas - Pinsk, Amur and Danube.

The most powerful were the Baltic and Black Sea fleets. Unlike other fleets, they each had a squadron (1-2 battleships, several cruisers and destroyer divisions), a detachment of light forces, and 2 formations of submarines each. In addition, they included Air Force units, coastal units and air defense facilities. The Pacific Fleet did not have large surface ships, but it was much stronger in terms of torpedo boats, submarines and aviation. The Northern Fleet was the smallest. The basis of its combat forces consisted of formations of submarines, 8 destroyers, 7 patrol ships and 116 aircraft. The coastal defense of the fleet included 14 stationary artillery batteries with guns of 100-180 mm caliber.

In the course of the war, the combat power of the fleets, despite losses (1,014 ships of various classes perished), gradually increased. Over a thousand warships were given to the fleet by domestic industry. Part was repaired directly on the fleets. The Navy received a certain number of ships from the Allies as Lend-Lease supplies. At the same time, weapons were improved. More than

effective types of mines, torpedoes, radar and hydroacoustic devices. The composition of the Northern Fleet increased most intensively, to which a part of surface ships and submarines from the Baltic and Pacific Fleets, the Caspian Flotilla were relocated by sea, along river channels and by rail, and ships from England and the USA were also received.

The rapidly changing strategic situation during the war made it necessary to carry out repeated partial reorganization of the Navy. Already at the very beginning of the war, fundamentally new formations began to be created - defensive areas. The first association of this kind was the Odessa defensive region, created by decision of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command in August 1941. Then the Sevastopol, Novorossiysk and other defensive regions were formed. As the experience of the war showed, such an organization, born of combat practice, ensured the more expedient use of the diverse forces of the Navy and the Ground Forces in the defense of strategically important territories and facilities in coastal areas, their reliable protection from land, air and sea.

A characteristic feature of the organizational development of the fleet during this period was the formation on its basis of a large number of formations and units (brigades, regiments and battalions) of the Marine Corps. As a rule, they were created at the expense of the personnel of ships, coastal crews, cadets of naval schools and marching reinforcements and were used on various fronts, but mainly in coastal areas. During the war, the marines became an independent branch of the fleet. 21 marine brigades and about 40 marine rifle brigades, several dozen separate regiments and battalions of marines fought on various fronts.

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At the same time, in connection with the development of the offensive and the advance of troops along the sea coast, there is a need to create new naval bases (naval bases), as well as special naval defense regions (SDOs), which included several naval bases and coastal defense sectors. In particular, in 1944 the Tallinn and Riga MORs were formed.

The composition of river, lake and sea flotillas is constantly changing. Depending on the situation, some of them are disbanded, others are created again. In 1941, for example, the Pinsk and Danube river flotillas were disbanded, and instead 7 new flotillas were created - the White Sea, Ladoga, Onega, Ilmen, Chud, Azov and Volga. Then the Onega flotilla was liquidated, but in 1942 it was formed again. In 1943, the Dnieper and Azov flotillas were formed for the second time. In 1944, the Danube and, for the second time, the Chudskaya flotilla were restored.

During the war years, the aviation of the Navy received significant development. It included large formations of mine-torpedo, bomber, assault and fighter aviation. Its aircraft fleet almost doubled, and by the end of the war it had about 5,000 combat aircraft. Thanks to this, the aviation of the Navy got the opportunity to solve problems not only in the interests of the fleets, but also to assist the fronts in coastal areas, to deliver more powerful and effective strikes against administrative, political, industrial and military targets deep behind enemy lines.

On the whole, the main strategic line in the construction of the Navy was subordinated to the general goals of armed struggle in the continental theaters of military operations and in coastal zones. The main attention was paid to increasing the ability of the fleets to support the actions of the Ground Forces in coastal areas. At the same time, forces were gradually built up to operate on the enemy's sea lanes and carry out tasks to combat his naval forces while protecting their own waterways.

Having received a comprehensive development, the Navy played an important role in achieving victory over the enemy.

A certain role in the conduct of the war was assigned to the border and internal troops. The border troops took an active part in repulsing the enemy invasion, and later covered the state border in the north, south and east of the country. The internal troops ensured the protection of strategic and industrial facilities, railway communications and front-line rear, fought against agents and subversive subversive activities of the enemy.

Already in the summer of 1941, on the basis of the border and internal troops, 15 rifle divisions were formed and transferred to the army in the field. Subsequently, part of the personnel of the troops was systematically sent to form reserves and make up for losses at the front. With the entry of the Red Army to the western state border, the border service was restored.

The rear of the Armed Forces, which is one of the most important elements of their combat potential, played a huge role in the implementation of the strategy's plans during the war years. Organizationally, it was subdivided into military, operational and rear services of the center. The latter was the highest echelon of the Logistics of the Armed Forces. It was based on rear formations, units and institutions, warehouses and arsenals with stocks of materiel, hospitals, repair and other bodies of central subordination. The main tasks of the rear are to meet the needs of the active fronts and fleets in ammunition, fuel, food and other materiel, restore damaged equipment, evacuate and treat the wounded and sick.

The experience of the first months of the war showed that the readiness of the rear to provide the army with everything necessary was beyond criticism. Deploy it

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The transition was carried out slowly, much of the equipment that was transferred from the national economy upon mobilization was simply not suitable for use in a combat situation. Insufficient mobility

rear organs often led to their lagging behind the troops. The situation was aggravated by the unreliable operation of transport. Therefore, a tense and in some cases critical situation immediately developed with the provision of troops with material and technical means, especially ammunition.

Based on the experience of military operations in the summer and autumn of 1941, the first rather significant reorganization of the Logistics of the Armed Forces was carried out, thanks to which it was possible to strengthen its relationship with the national economy of the country. Material resources were now brought closer to the troops, the problem of maintaining their stocks in the troops at a strictly defined level was solved, field depots and army field bases, powerful automobile formations, supply and evacuation units were created in the fronts. At the same time, the aviation rear was also reorganized. In the rear system of the Armed Forces, new special troops appeared - automobile and road, and the railway troops were replenished with a number of new special formations.

At the same time, measures were taken to improve the systems of medical and technical support.

All this improved the rear situation in the Armed Forces for some time. However, in 1944-1945. In connection with the conduct of major strategic offensive operations, the needs of the troops for material and technical means have increased dramatically. We had to urgently take additional measures to significantly strengthen the capabilities of the rear in all levels, but primarily in the operational and strategic.

Thus, the carrying capacity of front-line transport was increased from 1,500 to 6,000 to 8,000 tons. Reinforced railroad troops. Transshipment areas were equipped at the junction of the Soviet gauge with the Western European ones. The supply arm has been reduced in the operational and military rear. The depth of the rear areas of the fronts decreased to 150-250 km, and of the armies to 50-100 km. All this helped to increase the reliability of the logistic support of the Armed Forces.

On the whole, the general strategy for the building and development of the Soviet Armed Forces was carried out during the war, taking into account its nature and subordinated to military-political and strategic tasks. It was aimed mainly at building up the combat power of troops and fleets in advance of the enemy, and at first to effectively repel his offensive, and then at conducting mainly large strategic offensive operations with decisive goals, increasing the combat readiness of the fronts and fleets, and their ability to successfully solve various tasks in any, including the most difficult conditions of the military-political and strategic situation.

3. Strategic deployment of the Armed Forces and the conduct of military operations in the initial period of the war

The rapid development at the end of the 1930s of new means of armed struggle, especially tanks and aircraft, drastically changed the conditions for the entry of states into the war. The threat arose that the aggressor would deliver powerful and sudden blows and, at the very beginning of the war, crush his opponents before they had time to deploy and put into action the bulk of their armed forces. It was on this variant that the strategic plans of Germany were built during its attack on

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European countries in 1939-1940. A similar idea was present in the plan "Barbarossa".

The Soviet military-political leadership took into account such a danger, but still believed that in relation to the USSR it could not be realized due to the vast size of the country's territory, its colossal capabilities and the unfavorable balance of forces and means for Germany. In any case, it was absolutely convinced that in the event of war in its initial period, despite all its importance, intractable problems would hardly arise. All hope was that military operations would develop according to a typical pattern characteristic of past WARS.

Reality, however, disproved these hopes. The initial period of the war was in many ways fatal for the Soviet Armed Forces. The related tasks of transferring the country and the Armed Forces from a peaceful to a military position, strategic deployment and conducting the first operations acquired an unprecedented acuteness and for many months predetermined the unfavorable course of events.

Fascist Germany, which had been preparing for an attack on the Soviet Union for a long time, created an enormous military and economic potential and an unprecedentedly powerful military machine. The total number of its armed forces by mid-1941 amounted to about 7.3 million people. The ground forces, numbering about 5.2 million people, included 214 divisions and 7 separate brigades. They were armed with 5,639 tanks and assault guns, over [0 thousand aircraft, more than 6] thousand guns and mortars. The Navy by this time had 5 battleships, 4 heavy and 4 light cruisers, 43 destroyers and destroyers, 161 submarines and other ships.

To attack the Soviet Union, the Wehrmacht command allocated 190 divisions together with the allies, including 19 tank and 14 motorized. This grouping numbered 5.5 million people, about 4,300 tanks and assault guns, 47,200 guns and mortars, almost 5,000 combat aircraft and over 190 warships. 83% of the ground forces of the Wehrmacht and 4 out of 5 air fleets were sent to the East. All these forces and means were deployed in three strategic directions: northern, central and southern. Only 24 divisions remained in the reserve of the main command of the ground forces."

In accordance with the Barbarossa plan, the immediate goal of the first operations was to deliver sudden powerful strikes, to destroy in the shortest possible time the troops of the Soviet border military districts between the border and the Western Dvnnna and Dnieper rivers, which was supposed to open the way for German troops to advance to Leningrad. , Moscow and Donbass.

By June 1941, the Soviet Ground Forces had 303 rifle, tank, motorized and cavalry divisions (about a quarter of them were in the formation stage). The Navy had 3 battleships, 7 cruisers, 54 leaders and destroyers, over 157 other surface ships, 477 combat boats and 212 submarines in service.

The repulsion of possible aggression from the West was assigned to the troops of five border military districts (Baltic, Western and Kiev Special, Leningrad and Odessa), three fleets (Northern, Red Banner Baltic and Black Sea) and two flotillas (Pinsk and Danube). This grouping consisted of 163 rifle, cavalry, tank and motorized divisions, 12 brigades, 2,743 thousand people, 57 thousand guns and mortars, 12,782 tanks, 8,696 serviceable combat aircraft and 545 warships (including 3 battleship, 7 cruisers, 45 leaders and destroyers, 127 submarines)"? All these forces constituted the first strategic echelon of the Armed Forces. On the western borders, 13 combined arms armies were deployed to cover it.

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Scheme 40. The initial grouping of forces at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. Plan "Barbarossa"

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The second strategic echelon included 7 combined arms armies, which continued to concentrate and deploy at the designated line along the river. Dnieper. They included 77 rifle, tank and motorized divisions.

Unlike the troops of the Wehrmacht, which were fully mobilized and deployed, and also had two years of combat experience, the Soviet troops remained mainly in the states and in peacetime deployment, were dispersed over a vast territory and did not have a clearly defined operational grouping that corresponded to the actual situation. And at that moment it was decisive.

The order of deployment of the Soviet Armed Forces in case of war was determined by a number of documents. On October 14, 1940, the People's Commissar of Defense sent the "Plan for the Strategic Deployment of the Armed Forces" for government approval, but it was never considered and approved. The mobilization plan "MP-4] approved in February 1941 and in May of the same year the "Plan for operational cover of the state border" were constantly adjusted. But most importantly, major miscalculations were made in the developed plans. First, the necessary measures were not foreseen to ensure the precise implementation of the deployment plan and prevent its disruption by the enemy. Secondly, due to an incorrect assessment of the possible actions of the aggressor, the main grouping of Soviet troops was created in the southwestern, and not in the most important western direction, where, in connection with this, a clearly unfavorable balance of forces arose. Thirdly, the operational deployment was planned without any regard for the actual composition and state of combat readiness of the troops; in a number of cases, the first echelon included formations and formations, the formation of which had barely begun; finally, most of the fortified areas were created very close to the border. At a very close distance to the border, warehouses and bases with stocks of materiel were brought up, as they proceeded from the interests of the subsequent transition to the offensive. As a result, almost all of this fell into the hands of the enemy.

It is also characteristic that, according to the revised mobilization plan, all troops were mobilized not in three, as previously envisaged, but in one turn, and the formation of many new formations, in particular mechanized corps, was planned even without taking into account the arrival of equipment. The result turned out to be sad: many of them had to enter the battle in an incapacitated state.

In the military districts, of all the documents of the war plan, only cover plans were finally worked out. The rest were all being finalized, and the plans for the first operations had not yet begun at all. Of course, such incomplete planning could not but affect the actions of the command and troops at the beginning of the war.

The situation was aggravated by the fact that Stalin, in an effort to delay the inevitable clash with Germany, twice (June 13 and 20, 1941) rejected the proposals of the People's Commissariat of Defense to bring the border military districts to full combat readiness. Therefore, until the fateful day of June 22, 1941, they remained in peacetime mode. Any initiative of the commanders, aimed at increasing the readiness of formations and formations to repel a possible surprise attack by the enemy, was resolutely suppressed from the Kremlin under the pretext that this could provoke the enemy into action.

Nevertheless, individual measures for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces, although with some caution, began to be carried out as early as mid-May 1941. Thus, in May and early June, about 800 thousand conscripts were called up from the reserve, which made it possible to complete divisions, a number of units of other military branches and the Air Force. On May 14, the sophomore graduation was held

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kov military schools with their direction in the border military districts". And from the next day, the transfer to the western and southwestern directions, to the border of the Desna and Dnieper rivers, of the armies of the second strategic echelon began, including the 22nd Army from the Ural Military District to the Vitebsk region, the 20th Army to the Mogilev region from the Oryol military district, to the region of Chernigov, Gomel and Bakhmach - by the 21st army from the Volga military district, to the region of Belaya Tserkov, Cherkasy - by the 19th army from the North Caucasian military district, to the region of Proskurov, Khmelniki - 16th th Army from the Trans-Baikal Military District, to the Mironovka area - the 25th Rifle Corps from the Kharkov Military District. From the second half of June, more than half of the second echelons and reserves of the frontier military districts began to consistently advance to areas 20-80 km away from the state border. However, all these measures were very late and by the beginning of the war were not

completed. Therefore, a full-scale strategic deployment had to be carried out already during the outbreak of the war, in the most difficult situation, under powerful blows from the advancing enemy.

On June 22, the Baltic, Western and Kiev Special Military Districts were transformed into fronts, and the next day the mobilization of citizens liable for military service in 1905-1918 was announced in the country. birth (from 23 to 36 years). K | In July, 5.3 million people were mobilized into the army and navy, and 96 additional formations were formed. At the same time, the creation of associations, formations and units in the internal districts provided for by the mobilization plan began, with their dispatch to the army in the field. Basically, the mobilization was completed in an organized manner and on time. In the border areas, however, it was actually thwarted: more than 500 thousand mobilized were in German captivity, never arriving in their units." The transport intended for them from the national economy did not enter the troops either.

The tragic outcome of the initial period of the war and the huge losses of the Soviet troops did not allow to bring the strength of the Armed Forces to the level provided for by the mobilization plan and made it necessary to reconsider its fundamental provisions. In order to make up for losses, recruit a large number of new military units and create reserves in August 1941, an additional mobilization of fourteen more ages of those liable for military service 1890-1904 was carried out. and conscripts born before 1923, and the formation of militia formations on a voluntary basis also began. As a result, by the end of 1941, the strength of the Armed Forces began to amount to about 9.5 million people, 600 thousand more than envisaged by the mobilization plan.

In the most difficult conditions, the operational deployment of troops began and was carried out. Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. | on bringing the troops to full combat readiness, given at half past one in the morning on June 22, arrived in the military districts too late: 1.5-2 hours remained before the start of the war. In some armies, the headquarters finished deciphering it after the start of hostilities. Many formations were not ordered to put them on alert at all, so that they were simply taken by surprise. In most areas, the rise of troops on combat alert and their exit to the designated lines was carried out in an unorganized manner. It immediately became clear that the cover plans did not correspond to the real situation. Attempts to act strictly according to this plan only exacerbated the already crisis situation of the troops.

The fact is that, in accordance with the plan for covering the 2,000 km front, from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea, it was ordered to deploy 40 rifle and 2 cavalry divisions in the first line. Thus, each of them accounted for about 50 km, or even up to 100 km. This allowed the enemy to strike in the directions

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Scheme 42. The strategic position of the Armed Forces of the USSR at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War (June 22, 1941)

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his blows to achieve superiority by 5-8 times or more. Of course, no one was ready for this.

The tasks assigned to the troops did not correspond to the situation either. Thus, according to the plan of each army of the first echelon, a cover area was assigned with the task of "stubborn defense on the state border to prevent the enemy from invading, firmly cover the mobilization, concentration and deployment of the main forces, and in the event of an enemy breakthrough, eliminate him." However, under the existing conditions, such a task was completely impossible, because the majority of divisions needed from 3 to 10 hours to rise on combat alert and reach their directions, not counting the time to take up defenses and prepare for battle. As a result, most of the divisions did not have time to turn around. Many of them entered the battle on the move in parts, while suffering heavy losses. Part of the formations entered the battle without field and anti-aircraft artillery, which had previously been sent to the district training grounds for training firing.

The most tragic thing was that from the very beginning the command and control of the troops turned out to be violated. Most of the army commanders, commanders of corps and divisions, and their headquarters lost contact with subordinate troops. Not knowing the true situation, they gave contradictory orders, which were impossible to fulfill. In many areas, disorganization and disorder in the deployment and actions of troops have been added to the general confusion.

In the Baltic Special Military District, before the start of the war, only separate battalions and regiments reached the designated cover lines near the border. The rest of the troops deployed and engaged in battle with superior enemy forces from the march. A particularly difficult situation arose in the Western Special Military District, where the outbreak of war found most of the troops in military camps. In the Kiev Special Military District, the advanced units began to reach the state border by 4-6 o'clock in the morning, when the enemy had already crossed it, and in a number of sectors he deeply wedged into Soviet territory. The situation in the Odessa military district turned out to be more favorable, where the chief of staff, General M.V. their areas and the dispersal of aviation over field airfields. Therefore, the first attempts of the enemy to go on the offensive were repulsed here.

The Soviet Air Force found itself in an extremely difficult situation. On the very first day of the war, 66 airfields were subjected to sudden enemy air strikes. Already by noon on June 22, about 1,200 aircraft were destroyed, of which over 800 were on the ground. Over half of these losses occurred in the Western Special Military District, where the enemy managed to disable 738 aircraft, mostly of new types. Aviation of the Kyiv Special Military District by the same time lost 277 aircraft. As a result, German aviation immediately seized air supremacy.

The navy met the first blows of the enemy in the most organized way. Preparatory measures carried out in the fleets a few days before the start of the war to bring forces to readiness No. 2, and then No. 1 allowed them to successfully repel the first enemy air strikes and avoid losses.

From 6-7 am on June 22, heavy fighting began along the entire length of the western border. Separate units and frontier outposts offered heroic resistance, fought to the last man. Nevertheless, the general situation became more and more menacing every hour. In most directions, the enemy advanced rapidly. The commanders of the fronts and armies, in essence, lost control over the development of events. had no real idea

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information about the situation and the General Staff. At 7:15 a.m. People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko issued Directive No. 2, in which he demanded: "...with all your strength and means, attack the enemy forces and destroy them in areas where they violated the Soviet border. Do not cross the border until further notice. ..Destroy aircraft at enemy airfields and bomb the main groupings of its ground forces with powerful strikes by bomber and ground attack aircraft. Air strikes should be carried out to the depth of German territory up to 100-150 km. Bomb Koenigsberg and Memel. On the territory of Finland and Romania, until special instructions, do not make any raids"".

It is hard to imagine how these requirements did not correspond to what was happening at the fronts. Suffice it to say that by the evening of June 22, German tank and mechanized formations had advanced in the northwestern and western directions to a depth of 50-60 km. A particularly threatening situation arose at the junction of the Northwestern and Western fronts. A many-kilometer gap formed here, through which the 3rd German Panzer Group, having crossed the Neman, rushed to Vilnius and Minsk. Dissected into pieces by the strike of the 4th Panzer Group, which was part of the Army Group "North", the troops of the North

The Western Front were forced to hastily retreat. As a result, the right wing of the Western Front was under the threat of a deep bypass by the enemy. The situation was no better on the left wing of this front. 4 divisions of the 4th Army operating here were hit by 10 divisions of the German Army Group Center, including 4 tank divisions of the 2nd Panzer Group. Taken by surprise, the Soviet troops in this direction could not withstand the onslaught of superior enemy forces and also retreated. And the enemy, having captured Brest and Kobrin, continued his rapid advance. Only the Brest Fortress, in which part of the forces of 2 divisions remained, fought steadfastly in the encirclement for many weeks. In the zone of the Southwestern Front, Army Group South broke through to a depth of 15-20 km and, with the forces of the 1st Panzer Group, developed an offensive against Lutsk, covering the main front grouping from the north.

Thus, already on the first day of the war, the enemy achieved major strategic results, putting the troops of the border military districts under the threat of defeat. Meanwhile, in Moscow everything seemed quite different. In the operational report of the General Staff at 10 p.m. on June 22, the situation at the front was portrayed as if everything was relatively safe there, in any case, it did not cause any particular alarm. "The German regular troops," the report said, "during June 22 fought with the frontier units of the USSR, having little success in certain areas. In the afternoon, with the approach of the advanced units of the field troops of the Red Army, the attacks of the German troops on the predominant stretch of our border were repulsed with losses for the enemy.

Proceeding from such a completely incorrect assessment of the situation, the Soviet high military command continued to be guided in its actions by the previous plan, which was the basis of the plan for covering the state border. B21| h. 15 min. On June 22, People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko, with Stalin's approval, signed Directive No. 3, in which he demanded from the next morning to switch to offensive operations in the main directions in order to defeat the enemy strike groups. The troops of the North-Western and Western Fronts were ordered with the forces of 4 mechanized corps, with the support of front-line aviation and long-range aviation, to strike from the Kaunas and Grodno regions in the direction of Suwalki, surround and destroy the enemy's Suwalki grouping, and by the end of June 24, capture the Suwalki region. The task was set for the Southwestern Front by the forces of the 5th and 6th armies with the involvement of at least 5 mechanized corps and the entire

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frontal aviation, with the support of long-range aviation, strike in converging directions on Lublin, encircle and destroy the enemy grouping there, which was advancing on the Vladimir-Volynsky, Krystynopol front, and by the end of June 24, capture the Lublin region. On the wings of the Soviet-German front, the troops of the Northern and Southern fronts were to carry out defensive tasks.

In fact, this whole plan was built on sand, because it not only ignored the real situation, but also did not take into account the actual situation and condition of the mechanized corps, which, poorly equipped with equipment, were located at a distance of 120 to 400 km from the designated areas. deployment. Moreover, they themselves were subjected to powerful enemy air strikes. As a result, hastily organized counterattacks further complicated the already difficult situation of the fronts. It is true that in a number of directions it was possible for some time to tie down the enemy troops, but at the same time the fronts used up their last reserves. They suffered heavy losses and were forced to continue to withdraw.

In the northwestern direction, all attempts by the forces of the 12th and 3rd mechanized corps to launch flank counterattacks against the advancing German troops southwest of Siauliai and in the Raseiniai region were thwarted. Continuing the rapid offensive, the enemy already advanced on June 25 to a depth of 130 - 170 km, and in the morning of the next day, with their advanced units, they reached the river Daugavpils. Western Dvina.

Only the 11th mechanized corps attempted to launch a counterattack in the Grodno direction. Despite the lack of artillery and air support, he managed not only to stop, but also somewhat to press the enemy. The next day, formations of the 6th mechanized corps that had approached from the Bialystok region joined the battle on the move. However, due to the lack of fuel and ammunition, the counterattack was not developed. The enemy, having captured Vilnius, moved to Minsk.

In the Brest direction, the 14th mechanized corps, which suffered heavy losses, was unable to carry out a counterattack. Using this, the Nazi troops crossed the river. Shara and approached the Baranovichi. There was a threat of the capture of Minsk and the encirclement of the main forces of the Western Front in a giant "bag". To prevent this, on June 25 the Headquarters of the High Command ordered the 3rd and 10th armies of the front to be withdrawn to the Lida-Slonim-Pinsk line.

In the southwestern direction, the counterattack escalated into a major tank battle. It unfolded in the region of Lutsk, Radekhov, Brody, Dubno and lasted from 23 to 29 June. The main efforts were directed at defeating the enemy's Panzer Group 1, which had broken through at the junction of the 5th and 6th armies of the Southwestern Front. It was supposed to strike on its left flank - on Sokal and Dubno by the forces of three mechanized corps, and on the right flank, first on Berestechko, and then also on Dubno, with two mechanized corps. However, on June 23, only the advanced units of the 22nd and 15th mechanized corps entered the battle, and the main forces were brought into battle only the next day. On June 25, their efforts were stepped up: in the south, with the help of the 8th mechanized corps, which made a 400-kilometer march from the Sambir region, south of Lvov, and in the north, with the 9th and 19th mechanized corps, brought into battle. after a 200-220-kilometer march from the regions of Novograd-Volynsky and Zhitomir. But, due to the fact that they all deployed and entered the battle in parts, a single powerful counterattack did not work. It was only possible to delay the enemy tank grouping for a short time and return Dubno for a few hours. There was no question of any defeat of the German troops during this counterattack. As in other directions, the Southwestern Front was forced to retreat.

On June 29, the enemy crossed the Western Dvina in a number of sectors in the northwestern direction; and in the western direction, on June 28, Minsk was captured by sweeping attacks from the north and south. As a result, the main forces of the troops of the Western Front (3rd and 10th Armies) were surrounded to the west: Minsk, in the area of Nalibokskaya Pushcha. In the southwestern direction, the Nazi troops launched an offensive against Zhitomir and Proskurov. On the southern wing of the Soviet-German front, they crossed the Prut and launched an offensive against Balti. Meanwhile, from the territory of Finland, the German army "Norway" and the Finnish troops went on the offensive in the Murmansk, Ukhta and Leningrad directions.

In the situation that had arisen, the Headquarters of the High Command was forced to make a decision on the transition to strategic defense in Karelia, in the Leningrad region, along the river. Western Dvina and the line of fortified areas along the old state border. Thus, the border battle ended in a major defeat for the Soviet troops: the first strategic echelon lost almost half of its combat strength. The enemy advanced 150-300 km deep into Soviet territory, threatening Leningrad, Tallinn, Pskov, Smolensk, Kyiv, and Odessa. The Soviet military strategy did not cope with the tasks that arose before it. A radical change in the entire strategic plan of the war was urgently required.

In turn, the German high command believed that the operation "Barbarossa" was developing classically, and therefore did not even think of making any serious adjustments to the subsequent actions of its troops. True, Hitler was worried about the stubborn resistance of the Soviet armies surrounded to the west of Minsk. Therefore, he entrusted their destruction to the army corps, which arrived from the OKH reserve along with the command of the 2nd German army. The rest of the forces, including the tank groups, united in the 4th Panzer Army, were ordered to resolutely develop the offensive to the east.

The strategic plan of the Soviet command at this stage was to stop the advance of the enemy, undermine its offensive power, hold important lines and areas, buy time to deploy new forces and prepare defensive lines in the rear. At the same time, many new tasks arose: it was necessary to finally stabilize the front, restore the combat capability of the troops of the first strategic echelon, especially in the western direction, create a deep defense, form strategic reserves, relocate fleet forces from threatened zones, etc. It was believed that, having completed the whole complex of these tasks, it is possible to ensure the implementation of measures to evacuate the population and industrial enterprises from threatened areas inland, gain time to restructure the work of industry for the needs of the war and build up military production.

It should be noted that by this time the Headquarters of the High Command had finally succeeded in revealing the true intentions of the enemy, establishing his forces and their distribution over sectors of the Soviet-German front. With this in mind, measures were taken to urgently strengthen the grouping of troops in the most important direction - Smolensk-Moscow and create a defense in depth here. From the southwestern direction, the 19th and 16th armies began to hastily be transferred here.

The troops of the second strategic echelon (19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd armies), which were united in the army group of the reserve of the High Command under the leadership of Marshal Budyonny, were to take up defense in the rear of the Western Front - from the Polotsk fortified area and further along the Vitebsk-Orsha line, and then along the river. Dnieper to Loev. To the east of this line, at a distance of 180-200 km, the 24th and 28th armies occupied the defenses. Subsequently, these events played an important role, especially in the

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de Smolensk battle, which became the climax of the initial period of the WAR.

In general, during this period (from June 22 to July 9, 1941), the Soviet Armed Forces carried out three simultaneous strategic defensive operations: the Baltic one - by the troops of the North-Western Front and the forces of the Baltic Fleet, the Belorussian one - by the troops of the Western Front, the forces of long-range bombardment aviation and the Pinsk flotilla and the Lvov-Chernivtsi flotilla - by the forces of the South-Western Front. All of them were carried out in bands with a length of 350 to 800 km. For 15-18 days, Soviet troops retreated 300-600 km deep. These days, full of tragedy for the Soviet soldiers, were distinguished by an extremely sharp and tense struggle on land, in the air and at sea. At the first stage, it was based on actions to repel the enemy invasion in border battles, at the second stage - the defense of strategically important lines and areas with the expectation of preventing its breakthrough to the most important military-political and industrial centers of the country.

At the second stage, as in the first days of the war, the strategic situation continued to be exceptionally difficult in all directions. In the northern direction, Soviet troops retreated to the near approaches to Murmansk, left Petrozavodsk and Vyborg, but still held all the key regions of the Arctic and the Kirov railway.

In the northwestern direction, as a result of a counterattack by the 21st mechanized and 2nd airborne corps near Daugavpils, the Soviet troops managed to detain the enemy for some time in the middle reaches of the Western Dvina. However, soon the troops of Army Group North broke through the defenses of the 8th and very weak 27th armies, which were part of the Northwestern Front, captured Riga and, building on success, reached the approaches to Tallinn and captured Pskov. There was a threat of their breakthrough to Luga and Novgorod.

In the western direction, Soviet troops, encircled west of Minsk, continued to fight heroically until July 8. Many units managed to break out of the ring, but most laid down their heads there or were taken prisoner. The remnants of the troops of the front were driven back beyond the river. Berezina, and then to the Dnieper. To eliminate the gap that had formed, the Western Front was transferred to the army group of the reserve of the High Command. This

made it possible to delay the enemy for some time, but the attempt of the 5th and 7th mechanized corps to throw him back to the west with a counterattack failed. Soon the German troops, having captured Vitebsk, Orsha, Mogilev, began to prepare an attack on Smolensk.

By the beginning of July, there had been a complete change of command on the Western Front. The front commander, General D. G. Pavlov, and a number of other responsible officials were removed from their posts and shot. General A.I. Eremenko first took command of the front, and a few days later Marshal S.K. Timoshenko. But the change of pieces on the chessboard, to the great surprise of Stalin, did not give anything: it was not possible to change the situation even after that.

In the southwestern direction, Soviet troops with | | Until July 10, they retreated to the line of the Korostensky, Novograd Volynsky, Shepetovsky, Starokonstantinovsky and Proskurovsky fortified regions. All measures were taken to occupy them with troops in advance and stop the enemy. In turn, the enemy sought to cut off the Soviet troops from the URs (according to German terminology, "Stalin's lines") and break through to the Dnieper and Kyiv on the shoulders of the retreating units.

At first, the withdrawal of Soviet troops took place in an organized manner. All the armies of the Southwestern Front occupied the fortified areas, but they failed to gain a foothold on them. With a sudden blow, the enemy made a breach, first in Novograd-Volynsky, and then in Shepetovsky and Starokonstantinovsky URs and, throwing tank

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and motorized units, on July 9 Berdichev captured with a swift blow from the north-west. Two days later, German tank divisions broke through to Zhitomir. Attempts by the Soviet troops to knock them out of these cities with a counterattack turned out to be futile. Now the enemy has opened the way to Kyiv and the southeast, along the Dnieper, bypassing the main forces of the Southwestern and Southern fronts.

In the southern direction, the situation remained relatively stable for a long time. But when part of the divisions had to be urgently transferred from this front to the Southwestern, the balance of forces on the southern wing changed in favor of the enemy. Using this, the 11th German and then two Romanian armies stepped up the onslaught, broke through to the Dniester and launched an offensive against Chisinau.

The fierce battles that unfolded on July 9-10 on the approaches to Luga, Smolensk, Kyiv and Kishinev ended the initial period of the war. Since that time, new tasks have arisen for the troops of both sides. Formations of the second strategic echelon of the Soviet Armed Forces entered the battle. New strategic defensive operations began.

In general, the political and strategic consequences of the initial period of the war turned out to be extremely difficult for the USSR and its Armed Forces. The Soviet troops suffered a severe defeat. But the enemy also won at a considerable cost. It was the first time since the beginning of the Second World War that he met with such stubborn resistance.

Armed struggle during this period was conducted with unprecedented tension, military operations unfolded on a huge front and in separate directions, were conducted in highly dynamic, maneuverable forms with large gaps in the formation of troops. Taking advantage of the absence of a continuous front, the enemy was able to carry out deep breakthroughs, conduct an offensive at high rates, cut through and encircle individual groupings of Soviet troops.

For its part, the Soviet command also tried to launch counterattacks on the enemy, to flexibly maneuver forces and means. The defensive operations of the Soviet troops were carried out in wide bands: the army - 100-200 km, the front - 300-500 km, with the invariable desire to stop the enemy at any cost, inflict maximum damage on him. However, the general unfavorable situation often forced the Soviet command to throw the second echelons and reserves into battle on the move, to put them into action in parts, which led to the instability of both operational and strategic defense. By the end of the initial period of the war, the enemy had advanced in the zone of the North-Western Front to a depth of 400-450 km, the Western Front - 450-600 km, and the South-Western Front - 300-350 km. Its average rate of advance was 20 to 30 km per day, and that of tank groupings, 40 to 60 km*.

Nevertheless, the main strategic task assigned to the army groups "North", "Center" and "South", which provided for the destruction of Soviet troops in the Baltic states, Belarus and the Right-Bank Ukraine, was not fulfilled. The Soviet Armed Forces withstood and, despite the retreat and heavy losses, retained their strength for subsequent battles.

Throughout the initial period of the war, along with ground operations, there was fierce fighting in the air and at sea.

The main task of the Soviet Air Force was to cover and support the defensive actions of the troops of the fronts, as well as to fight for the conquest of air supremacy. The difficult situation that developed at the beginning of the war forced the use of the main aviation forces primarily in the interests of the ground forces. At the same time, it was also widely used to solve other problems. In just 20 days of hostilities, Soviet pilots made 47 thousand sa-

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Scheme 43. The general course of initial operations in the Great Patriotic War

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sorties, although, of course, in activity they were significantly inferior to enemy aircraft * '.

Unlike the German Air Force, in whose operations strikes against airfields occupied the most important place, Soviet aviation concentrated its main efforts on destroying enemy aircraft in the air. Under favorable conditions, strikes were organized against airfields and targets deep behind enemy lines. Thus, from June 25 to June 30, the first air operation was carried out to destroy enemy aircraft at the airfields of Finland and Northern Norway. Almost 540 aircraft were involved in it. Attacks were made on 19 airfields and at least 130 enemy planes were destroyed. On July 8, aviation from the Northwestern, Western, and Southwestern Fronts attacked 28 German airfields, while long-range aviation bombed another 14 airfields. In total, the pilots of the air forces of the fronts from June 22 to July 10 produced more than | thousand sorties and put out of action 348 enemy planes*?.

Already on the second day of the war, Soviet long-range bomber aviation and the Air Force of the Navy launched night attacks on important military-industrial facilities in the areas of Klaipeda, Koenigsberg, Danzig, Bucharest, Ploiesti, Helsinki, and Turku. True, at that time they had not so much military as political value.

The military actions of the Soviet fleets in the initial period of the war were aimed mainly at assisting the Ground Forces in coastal areas, organizing mine warfare and preventing enemy amphibious landings. For a long time, the Baltic Fleet held Hanko and the Moonsund Islands behind it, thus blocking the entry of enemy ships into the Gulf of Finland and diverting significant forces of its ground forces from the main directions. The forces of the fleet provided the flanks of their defending troops with air strikes and naval artillery. The Baltic Fleet played an important role in disrupting the plans of the German command to quickly capture the Baltic states and exit along the coast of the Gulf of Finland to Leningrad. From the first days of the war, the Northern Fleet actively operated on the enemy's sea lanes, and then directly participated in repelling the German offensive in the Arctic. The Black Sea Fleet and the Danube Flotilla did not allow the German-Romanian troops to launch a successful offensive along the Black Sea coast.

In general, despite the most severe defeats, the Red Army and the Navy in the initial period of the war were able to seriously disrupt the enemy's initial strategic plan. The enemy suffered serious damage. His troops lost up to 100 thousand people in 20 days, about half of the total number of tanks

Of course, in terms of the overall scale of the war and in comparison with the casualties suffered by the Soviet troops, these were small losses. But even they could not be compared with the losses of the enemy in Western Europe. Now, after the end of the border battles, the German strike groups were no longer able to advance non-stop, as was supposed under the Barbarossa plan. The command of the Wehrmacht was forced to make operational pauses in the actions of its troops, regroup forces, set new tasks and again organize offensive operations with the same goals.

Even the highest ranks of the Wehrmacht were forced to recognize the high stamina of the Soviet troops. In his military diary, F. Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces, made the following entry on June 22: "Information from the front confirms that the Russians are fighting everywhere to the last man. They surrender only in places, primarily where there is a large percentage of Mongolian people in the troops.

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stey (in front of the front of the 6th and 9th armies). It is striking that when artillery batteries, etc., are captured, only a few are taken prisoner. Part of the Russians fight until they are killed..."*

And yet, as a result of the first offensive operations successfully carried out by the Nazi troops, the Soviet Armed Forces were brought to the brink of disaster. Of the divisions available in the western border military districts by the beginning of the war, 28 were completely destroyed, another 70 lost more than half of their strength. The irretrievable losses of the North-Western, Western, South-Western and Southern fronts from June 22 to July 10 amounted to 9588 598 people, sanitary losses for the same period - 159 272 people. At the same time, most of the military equipment was lost, including 18,794 guns and mortars, 11,703 tanks and 3,985 aircraft.

On the territory occupied by the enemy, about 200 warehouses with weapons, ammunition, fuel and other material and technical means remained*. All this had a very unfavorable effect on the further conduct of the war.

4. Strategic defense

As already noted, during the years of the Great Patriotic War, the domestic military strategy used a wide variety of types, forms and methods of military operations. The main type of strategic actions of the Soviet Armed Forces ultimately became the strategic offensive. The number of major offensive operations carried out is almost three times the number of strategic defensive operations. In the general balance of time, military operations of troops related to repelling an enemy offensive take only 11-12 months out of 47. But if we take into account the operational pauses between offensive operations, when the troops passively held their lines, the proportion of defense will be much more significant.

In any case, the war, from the very beginning, forced the Soviet leadership to drastically change its attitude towards defense at all levels, primarily in the field of strategy. The previously prevailing opinion that strategic defense could be used only in exceptional cases and only in secondary areas turned out to be untenable. The real situation required the organization and conduct of strategic defense for a long time, both in individual strategic directions, primarily the main ones, and on the entire Soviet-German front.

The Soviet command resorted to strategic defense simultaneously in all strategic directions three times: in 1941, in 1942 and in the summer of 1943. In 1941 and 1942 the defense was forced, since the enemy had the strategic initiative and imposed his will. The transition to temporary strategic defense remained the only possible course of action for the Soviet Armed Forces. In 1943, the Soviet side was free to choose the forms of struggle. The situation and the composition of the Soviet troops made it possible to solve problems both in defense and offensive. But defense was chosen as the most reliable and economical way to disrupt the enemy's offensive plan.

Subsequently (in the autumn of 1943 and in 1944) operational and strategic defense was organized only in certain areas, and for a short time. It was designed to ensure the conduct of decisive offensive operations where the fate of the war was determined.

Each defensive campaign, as well as each strategic defensive operation, had its own characteristics. The longest and the scale

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The summer-autumn campaign of 194] was a major one, when the Soviet Armed Forces had to conduct a strategic defense and repulse the aggressor's offensive simultaneously in three strategic directions. In this campaign, three groups of strategic operations were successively carried out: the first group in the initial period of the war from June 22 to July 9 in the Baltic States, Belarus and Right-Bank Ukraine; the second - from mid-July to the end of September on the outskirts of Leningrad, in the western regions of Russia and in Left-Bank Ukraine; the third - in October-November 1941, when repulsing the enemy offensive on Tikhvin, Moscow and Rostov.

The strategic defensive operations of the second group were carried out by the troops of the first and the main grouping of troops of the second strategic echelons that retained their combat capability. They were fought in the conditions of an already established strategic front, but in an equally acute, highly dynamic and tense situation.

At this stage, the enemy sought to capture Murmansk, Leningrad, Smolensk, Kyiv, defeat the groupings of Soviet troops on the Dnieper line and open their way to Arkhangelsk, Moscow and the Donbass. In other words, the next strategic tasks arising from the Barbarossa plan were being solved. According to the calculations of the Wehrmacht command, their implementation was not particularly difficult for the troops. Halder wrote in his diary: "... when we cross the Western Dvina and the Dnieper, then it will be not so much about defeating the enemy's armed forces, but about taking away his industrial areas from the enemy and not giving him the opportunity to use using the gigantic power of their industry and inexhaustible human reserves, to create new armed forces ... ""*. However, very little time will pass and he will see with his own eyes how cruelly he was mistaken.

And the Soviet troops concentrated their efforts on holding the occupied strategic line and ensuring the final stabilization of the front line. To this end, they, continuing to repel the enemy's offensive, carried out the Battle of Smolensk and three strategic defensive operations: in the Arctic and Karelia, Leningrad and Kyiv.

The Battle of Smolensk, which unfolded in the Moscow strategic direction, was of decisive importance. It took place over the course of two months (from July 10 to September 10) in a vast area - along a front of about 600-650 and a depth of 200-250 km. By its nature, this battle is a complex of interrelated front-line defensive and offensive operations: Smolensk defensive, Smolensk offensive, offensive in the Bobruisk direction, Gomel-Trubchevskaya defensive and Yelninskaya offensive.

On the German side, Army Group Center took part in the battle, and on the Soviet side, the Western, Central, Reserve and Bryansk fronts. At the same time, the 22nd and 19th armies, and then the 29th army, were sequentially deployed, and as the forces approached, they were included in the hostilities on the right wing of the Western Front, in the center - first the 20th, and then 16th and finally 30th, 24th and 28th armies, on the left wing of the front - 21st army. At the same time, the remnants of the 3rd, 4th and 10th armies, which had lost their combat capability, were withdrawn to the reserve.

On July 10-11, Army Group Center, using tank troops, without waiting for the approach of infantry divisions, delivered powerful blows to the wings of the Western Front in the area of the Polotsk fortified region, near Nevel, east of Vitebsk, and then north and south of Mogilev. Having crossed the Dnieper, the enemy already on July 16 captured most of Smolensk. At the same time, his tank formations broke through to Velikie Luki, Yartsevo, Yelna and Roslavl. Their further advance was delayed by the reserve armies that had just been brought into battle. And on the Bobruisk and Gomel directions, the Soviet troops even managed to push back the German divisions, wresting

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rushing to the Dnieper, to release, though for a short time, Rogachev and Zhlobin. Fierce battles unfolded here.

Meanwhile, the Headquarters of the High Command, transformed on July 10 from the Headquarters of the High Command, successfully increased the depth of defense. On July 14, in the rear of the Western Front, a front of reserve armies consisting of 6 formations is created (on July 30 it will be transformed into a Reserve army with the task of going over to the defensive at the line of Staraya Russa-Ostashkov-Bely-Yelnya-Bryansk. In another 4 days On the western approaches to Moscow, the front of the Mozhaisk line of defense consisting of three armies was created, and on July 24, the Central Front, consisting of two armies, detached from part of the forces of the Western Front in the Gomel direction.

Due to the increased resistance of the Soviet troops, the Wehrmacht command was forced on July 30 to decide on a temporary transition to the defense in the Moscow direction and shifting its main efforts to the north with the aim of capturing Leningrad, and to the south - capturing Kiev, defeating the South-Western troops in Right-Bank Ukraine and the Southern Fronts and preparing the conditions for a subsequent offensive against the Donbass. For this, part of the forces of the 3rd Panzer Group was redirected from the western direction to the northwest, and to attack from the north, in the rear of the Gomel and Kiev groupings of Soviet troops, the 2nd Panzer Group and the 2nd Field Army from the Army Group were regrouped "Center".

Unfortunately, these changes in the enemy's plan were not immediately revealed by the Soviet command. Therefore, being fully confident that the Wehrmacht was still aiming all its forces for an attack on the capital, but not with a frontal strike, but with a roundabout maneuver, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, as before, took care, as before, mainly of strengthening the defense on the Moscow direction, keeping in their hands the Velikoluk and Gomel ledges, as well as the continuation of private offensive operations against the main forces of Army Group Center. At the same time, measures to eliminate the threat looming over the right wing of the South-Western and the left wing of the North-Western fronts were taken hesitantly and with great delay.

At the end of July and throughout August, the Western, Central, and then the Reserve Fronts made persistent attempts to return Smolensk, break through to Roslavl, Bykhov and eliminate the dangerous Elninsk ledge, which is southeast of Smolensk. Even the entry into battle of the 29th, 30th, 24th and 28th armies did not change the situation. And the reason was that scattered blows were delivered, which could not bring success. Moreover, at the end of July, the enemy managed to surround the 16th and 20th armies of the Western Front east of Smolensk. Only after 8-9 days the remnants of these armies barely escaped from the encirclement.

In the first days of September, the Western, Reserve and Bryansk fronts (deployed since mid-August to cover the Bryansk direction) with the forces of seven armies launched another offensive northeast of Smolensk, in the Yelnya region and west of Bryansk. However, only the 24th Army of the Reserve Front achieved real success, forcing the enemy's Elninsk grouping to retreat. In other areas, the operation did not receive development. On September 10, the fronts in the entire western direction went over to the defensive. The battle of Smolensk is over. Its main result is that the Soviet troops pinned down large enemy forces for a long time, and thanks to

The strategic defensive operations in the northwestern and southwestern strategic directions acquired a completely different character.

The Leningrad strategic defensive operation began on July 10, when the troops of the Army Group "North" reached the approaches to Tallinn and, breaking through the defenses of the Soviet troops southeast of Pskov, launched an attack on Luga and Novgorod. The troops of the Northern (from August 23 -

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Leningrad) and the North-Western fronts, as well as the 52nd separate army and the forces of the Baltic Fleet. Attempts by the German troops to break through the Luga line of defense on the move were frustrated by stubborn resistance, frontal and flank counterattacks of the Soviet troops. On July 19, the enemy was forced to suspend the offensive.

It resumed only at the beginning of August. This time, the German troops, having dismembered the 8th Army of the Northern Front, broke through to the Gulf of Finland, blockaded Tallinn, and then launched a second attack on Leningrad from three directions. In the last days of August, they captured Novgorod and Tallinn, broke through to Krasnogvardeisk and, finally, reached the near approaches to Leningrad.

The third attack on Leningrad began on September 8-9. After fierce fighting, which lasted until September 8, the enemy captured on the southwestern approaches to the city of Uritsk and blocked part of the forces of the 8th Army on the Oranienbaum bridgehead. In the south, he reached the outer city defensive line in the Pulkovo area, and east of Leningrad, he broke through to Lake Ladoga and captured Shlisselburg. Leningrad was in the ring of blockade. The heroic 900-day struggle of Leningraders in the besieged city began.

Even more complex and difficult for the Soviet troops was the Kiev strategic defensive operation. For more than two months, the troops of the Southwestern Front held Kyiv. Repeated attempts by the enemy to take it with a frontal attack from the west were repulsed. However, at the end of July, Army Group South, with the forces of the 1st Panzer Group, delivered a strong enveloping blow along the right bank of the Dnieper to Pervomaisk. At the same time, the Germans undertook from the west and from the border of the river. Dniester attack on Pervomaisk and Odessa. As a result, despite the inflicted counterattacks, two Soviet armies (6th and 12th) were surrounded and destroyed in the Uman region, and another one (9th) was dismembered and pressed to the sea in the Odessa region. Subsequently, from the bridgehead captured in the Kremenchug region on the left bank of the Dnieper, the enemy launched a blow from the south with his 1st Panzer Group, bypassing the Kyiv grouping of Soviet troops. But the main threat to her arose at this time in the north.

On August 8, the 2nd Field Army and the 2nd Panzer Group, which went on the offensive from the Bykhov-Roslavl line to the south, broke through the defenses of the Central, then the Bryansk fronts, captured Gomel and Konotop, and then, through the resulting 120-kilometer gap, broke through to the rear of the right-flank armies of the Southwestern Front. The commands of the front and the South-Western direction tried to take this grouping out of the attack and free up forces to close the gap by leaving Kiev, but their reasonable decision was rejected in the most categorical form by Stalin. The consequences were catastrophic.

On September 15, the enemy's 1st and 2nd Panzer Groups linked up in the Lkhovitse area. As a result, the 4 armies of the Southwestern Front, which were surrounded, were dismembered and soon defeated. And this meant that the entire southern wing of the Soviet-German front actually collapsed. Only through enormous efforts was it possible to restore an organized defensive front. The defense of Odessa held out for three months. But to the north, Army Group South, building on its success, broke through to the Donbass and Crimea.

In general, the situation and the course of the struggle for the Soviet Armed Forces from mid-July to the end of September 1941 developed unfavorably. The Soviet troops, weakened in previous defensive battles, experiencing an acute shortage of weapons, military equipment and ammunition, held back the enemy's onslaught at the cost of great effort, human and material costs. During this time, they lost over 1,400 thousand people, 3,797 tanks, more than 48 thousand guns and mortars, over 3 thousand aircraft. The enemy managed to advance another 240-300 km to the east. Vme

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At the same time, he suffered significant losses and in none of the strategic directions could he fully achieve his goals. By the end of September, the Wehrmacht troops had lost over 552 thousand people, or 16.7% of their initial strength. 1,603 German aircraft were shot down and 1,028 damaged. However, numerical superiority still remained on the side of the enemy: in people - 1.3 times, in guns and mortars - 1.9 times, in aircraft - 2.1 times. times.

At the third and final stage of the summer-autumn defensive campaign of 1941, the Soviet command concentrated its main efforts on the western direction and sought to protect the capital of the country, as well as defend the Donbass and Crimea, hold Leningrad and prepare the conditions for a counteroffensive. From September 29 to December 5, Soviet troops carried out two strategic defensive operations - Moscow and Donbass-Rostov. The most important and decisive was the Moscow one, during which the troops of the Western, Kalinin, Reserve and Bryansk fronts carried out six front-line defensive operations, repelling two attacks of the Nazi troops on Moscow.

On September 30-October 2, the Wehrmacht command, having regrouped large forces to the Moscow direction, including 8 mechanized corps, and only about 80 divisions, launched the long-prepared Operation Typhoon. With three strike groups, the enemy broke through the defenses of the Soviet troops east of Dukhovshchina,

Roslaw and Shosha, and, developing success in converging directions, a few days later surrounded 4 armies of the Western and Reserve fronts in the Vyazma region, and 2 armies of the Bryansk front south of Bryansk. By October 10-12, Rzhev, Gzhatsk, Orel, then Kalinin and Kaluga were taken. The way to Moscow was open.

In order to restore the disturbed front, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command (became known as such from August 8) began to hastily pull everything that it had to the Mozhaisk line of defense. Formations, units and separate groups of the Western and Reserve fronts that escaped from the encirclement also retreated here. On September 10, the troops of these fronts were united into one Western front. On the immediate approaches to the capital, the 16th Army was restored, the 5th Army was formed from the troops of the Mozhaisk Line, and the 43rd and 49th Armies were deployed to the south, and the 50th Army was deployed in the Tula region. The construction of defensive lines encircling Moscow began. On October 20, a state of siege was declared in the city. These and other emergency measures made it possible to delay the enemy, and then by the end of October, after fierce fighting near Kalinin (the Kalinin Front was formed from the troops of the right wing of the Western Front), Volokolamsk, Mozhaisk, Maloyaroslavets and Mtsensk, stop the enemy east of Kalinin, in 60-80 km west of Moscow, and in the Tula region.

However, the situation remained dangerous. On November 15-16, after a two-week pause, the enemy launched a second offensive against Moscow, enveloping it from the north and bypassing Tula from the south. In early December, he was on the near approaches to the capital. But with stubborn resistance, the Soviet troops stopped the enemy, and then, with the counteroffensive of the Western and Kalinin fronts that began, Moscow was saved.

Simultaneously with the Moscow strategic defensive operation, the Donbass-Rostov defensive operation was carried out in the southwestern and southern directions. In the course of it, the Soviet troops were unable to hold the occupied lines. The enemy captured Kharkov, Donbass, Crimea, blocked Sevastopol, broke into Rostov. But even here he did not achieve his set goal - to develop an offensive in the Caucasus.

Thus, in the summer-autumn campaign of 1941 all strategic defensive operations developed very unfavorably and unsuccessfully for the Soviet Armed Forces. But nevertheless, in none of them, despite the brilliant,

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It would seem that the success of the enemy, he never achieved the results he counted on. By the beginning of the winter of 1941/1942, when it was planned to victoriously end the war with the USSR, the German Wehrmacht was far from its intended goals and did not have the strength to conduct major offensive operations on the Eastern Front. This testified to the failure of Hitler's blitzkrieg strategy. In search of a way out of the situation that had arisen, the fascist German command had to revise the sequence of operations on the entire Eastern Front, and this led to new losses in the troops, and most importantly, loss of time.

In the summer-autumn defensive campaign of 1942, the Soviet Armed Forces conducted strategic defensive operations only on the southern wing of the Soviet-German front. As in 1941, they developed unfavorably for the Soviet troops, because they were accompanied by heavy losses and a deep (600-1,200 km) retreat. One of the main reasons for this was the reassessment by the Soviet Supreme High Command of the results of the strategic offensive in the winter of 1941/1942, an incorrect idea of the possibilities and nature of the enemy's forthcoming actions, and, in connection with this, the erroneous planning of the operation for the spring and summer of 1942.

During the course of the campaign, the armed struggle unfolded in the clash of two strategic plans.

The strategic offensive plan of the German command was contained in Hitler's directive No. 41, signed by him in April 1942. It consisted in organizing and conducting a series of successive offensive operations on the southern wing of the Eastern Front with the aim of defeating the Soviet troops west of the Don, reaching the Volga in the Stalingrad region, mastering the oil-bearing regions of the Caucasus and communications that lead through the Caucasus to Iran. At the same time it was supposed to capture Leningrad and Sevastopol.

After private offensive operations in the Donbass and Crimea ended in failure, the Soviet strategic defensive plan was to stop the enemy offensive, keep Stalingrad and the Caucasus, and, at the expense of the time gained, create conditions for preparing a counteroffensive.

During the campaign, Soviet troops conducted three strategic defensive operations: Voronezh-Voroshilovgrad, Stalingrad and North Caucasus. The first began on June 28 with the aim of repelling the offensive of the main forces of Army Group South on Voronezh. Weakened in the previous heavy battles and not having time to gain a foothold on the defensive lines, the troops of the left wing of the Bryansk and the right wing of the Southwestern Fronts were unable to hold their positions. The enemy broke through their defenses, first to the north and then to the south of Stary Oskol, surrounded and destroyed part of the forces of the two armies, and on July 4-6 reached Voronezh. To eliminate the breakthrough, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command transferred 2 combined-arms and 1 tank army, as well as 3 tank corps. In order to close the gap formed between the Bryansk and Southwestern Fronts, the Voronezh Front was deployed. This made it possible to stop the enemy, but could not change the general unfavorable situation for the Soviet troops. From July 7, the fascist German troops launched an offensive to the southeast, along the Don, with the intention of reaching the rear of the main forces of the Southwestern and Southern fronts. The headquarters of the Supreme High Command had to decide on their withdrawal beyond the Don and to Rostov. The enemy captured the Donbass, crossed the Don in its lower reaches and created a direct threat to Stalingrad and the North Caucasus.

The Stalingrad and North Caucasian strategic defensive operations were carried out almost simultaneously (the first began on July 17, and the second on July 25). IN

In their course, a crisis situation was created for the Soviet troops more than once, but unlike in 1941, they, conducting a mobile defense, promptly withdrew their main forces from the blow of enemy troops. The enemy did not succeed in encircling the main groupings of the Southwestern and Southern fronts.

Under such conditions, the German command repeatedly had to change its plans. At first, it concentrated the main efforts of its troops on the Stalingrad direction with the calculation of their subsequent turn to the Caucasus. And starting from July 18, the main forces of the 1st and 4th tank armies were thrown around Rostov. However, already on July 23, both tank armies were redirected to the Caucasus. A week later, they were given a new task: to take control of Stalingrad and the Caucasus at the same time. Moreover, approximately the same forces were aimed at each direction.

Combat operations to repel the enemy offensive on Stalingrad acquired a particularly tense character. They were carried out by the troops of the Stalingrad (Don) and South-Eastern (Stalingrad) fronts for 125 days in a zone 250-520 km wide, with a withdrawal depth of Soviet troops of 150 km. From the second half of July, battles unfolded on the distant approaches to Stalingrad, from mid-August - on the near approaches to the city, and, finally, in September - directly in Stalingrad itself. Despite repeated assaults, the enemy failed to complete the capture of the city. On the contrary, bogged down in Stalingrad, the troops of Army Group "B" were stretched out on a huge front. Having weakened flanks, they got into a dangerous

position.

In the Caucasian direction, the offensive of Group A was repulsed by the troops of the Southern (until July 28, 1942), North Caucasian and Transcaucasian fronts with the assistance of the forces of the Black Sea Fleet and the Azov military flotilla. Within 160 days, in a strip 320-1000 km wide, they carried out 7 front-line defensive operations. Soviet troops were forced to retreat 400-800 km, leaving Novorossiysk, Taman, Kuban, and most of the North Caucasus. In the end, they were thrown back to the passes of the Main Caucasian Range and the river. Terek, but still they repelled all enemy attempts to break through to Baku and the Transcaucasus.

Thus, in this case, too, the strategic defensive operations of the Soviet Armed Forces, despite serious defeats, led to the disruption of the enemy offensive, which went on the defensive on the entire front, the depletion of its strike groups, a change in the balance of forces and the creation of prerequisites for a counteroffensive.

In the summer-autumn campaign of 1943, a special place was occupied by the Kursk strategic defensive operation carried out by the troops of the Central, Voronezh and Steppe fronts. It lasted 19 days - from July 5 to July 23, and only in one central sector of the Soviet-German front in a strip 550 km wide and with a withdrawal depth of Soviet troops of 12-35 km. But in terms of its influence on the entire subsequent course of military events, its role can hardly be overestimated. In addition, in terms of its nature, conditions and methods of action of the Soviet troops, this operation is fundamentally different from all previous strategic defensive operations.

First of all, it should be noted that in this case the strategic defense was organized not by force, but deliberately. Soviet troops had a real opportunity to pre-empt the enemy in their actions and be the first to launch a strategic offensive. However, in view of the fact that he was also preparing a strike with powerful tank groupings on the Kursk salient, the Soviet command considered it more expedient to temporarily switch to strategic defense in order to meet the enemy on prepared lines, wear down and bleed his strike groupings in defensive battles, and then , entering fresh reserves, go to

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a decisive counteroffensive, and then a general strategic offensive. Secondly, the Soviet troops created the most developed and powerful system of defense in depth throughout the war. Moreover, they had a significant advantage over the enemy in terms of forces and means, and most importantly, even before the start of the operation, they had the entire composition of the necessary forces not only for defense, but also for the subsequent transition to the counteroffensive. Thirdly, for the first time a defensive operation was preceded by major air and anti-aircraft operations, and there was an active struggle to gain air supremacy.

Finally, starting an offensive, the enemy did not rely on surprise, as usual, but on the power of his first strike, since the directions of his strikes were well known to the Soviet command. Nevertheless, even under such conditions, the defensive operation demanded enormous tension from the Soviet troops. From the very beginning, both sides sought to preempt each other in building up forces. Already in the struggle for the tactical zone, not only army and front-line, but also partly strategic reserves were used.

German troops tried to break through to Kursk with a narrow "wedge". The culminating point was the largest tank battles on the northern face of the Kursk Bulge, in the Ponyri region, and on the southern face, in the Prokhorovka region. The outcome, unfavorable for the German side, as well as the sudden transition to the offensive of the Soviet troops on the Oryol bridgehead forced the command of the Wehrmacht on July 13 to give the order to stop the offensive and go on the defensive, and then to withdraw to the starting lines. This predetermined the collapse of all plans of the German command, not only for the summer campaign of 1943, but also for the subsequent conduct of the war.

The experience of the considered strategic defensive operations makes it possible to identify their characteristic features, to better understand the features of the national defensive strategy during the Great Patriotic War.

Throughout its entire length, strategic defense was used by the Soviet troops in an unfavorable situation for them with one goal - to disrupt the strategic offensive of the German troops, which was based on

several defining principles. In organizing such an offensive, the command of the Wehrmacht in all cases set decisive goals for itself and tried with great perseverance to achieve them. As a rule, an offensive was carried out in the form of a major operation by forces of one or more army groups in one or more strategic directions. At the same time, each army group solved independent tasks.

Usually the combat strength of an army group in an offensive included 3-5 field armies, 40-80 infantry and tank divisions, and 1,600 aircraft. The width of the offensive army group ranged from 350 to 250 km, advance depth - from 300 to 600 km. The decisive role in it was assigned to the ground forces and aviation. The main striking force was tank formations, consolidated into corps and tank groups (armies). The air force was used massively to gain and maintain air supremacy and continuous support for ground troops, especially tank groups. Concentrating superior forces in chosen directions, the fascist German troops broke through the defenses in narrow sectors and developed a rapid offensive in depth, having the majority of troops in the first echelon of the shock groupings, including almost all tank formations. The created tank "wedges" were supposed to break the defense and with deep enveloping strikes to take the main groupings of Soviet troops into "pincers", surround and dismember them. The final destruction of encircled forces was usually left to field armies.

As the war progressed, however, the German offensive strategy gradually changed. The goals and objectives of strategic offensive operations were limited from time to time.

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operations were reduced. Accordingly, the nature of the strategic defensive operations of the Soviet troops also changed. They became more and more active and dynamic, the stability of the defense increased, and the necessary prerequisites were created for their subsequent transition to the counteroffensive. All this was reflected in the strategic defensive operation on the Kursk Bulge, where it acquired classical forms.

The goals of strategic defensive operations were determined, as a rule, by the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. Usually they stemmed from the general military-political tasks of the war and pursued several goals: repelling enemy attacks in a certain strategic direction, exhausting and exhausting his troops, holding the occupied lines, gaining time and accumulating forces for going on the offensive.

Thus, in the first defensive operations of the initial period of the war, the main efforts were aimed at preventing the defeat of the main forces of the border military districts, weakening the strike groups of enemy troops, gaining the time necessary to concentrate and deploy reserves, and create a stable strategic defense front. . In the autumn of 1941, the main goals of defensive operations were to prevent the enemy from breaking through to large industrial and administrative-political centers, objects and lines of strategic importance, to create favorable conditions for inflicting a decisive defeat on those strike groups enemy that invaded the interior of the country. In the summer and autumn of 1942, the goals of defensive operations were: to prevent the capture of Stalingrad and the Caucasus, to gain time for the concentration and deployment of large strike groups, in order to then go on to a decisive counteroffensive. And the Kursk defensive operation was supposed to wear out and bleed the enemy strike groupings by deliberate defense, and then complete their complete defeat by going over to the counteroffensive.

In a number of operations, especially in 1941, the goals set were not always achieved. The main reasons for this are the superiority of the enemy in forces and means, especially in the directions of his main attacks, the high maneuverability of German tank groupings with constant air support, the enemy's use of the element of surprise, the delay of the Soviet troops in leaving the emerging encirclement, as happened, for example, in the defensive operation of the Southwestern Front in the Left-Bank Ukraine. In some cases, the unsatisfactory organization of interaction between the fronts and the poor security of their joints played a negative role (defensive operations of the Bryansk and Southwestern fronts in August 1941 and in the Voronezh direction in July 1942). Subsequently, the main tasks of defensive operations were carried out more fully, and most importantly, in a shorter time.

The war confirmed that the most important conditions for the successful conduct of strategic defensive operations are: the timely discovery of the enemy's strategic plan and the concentration of the main efforts on the direction of his main attack; skillful construction of strategic defense; timely restored strategic defense front; creation and effective use of strategic reserves; organization of close interaction between groupings of troops in different strategic directions.

Of particular importance was the earliest possible establishment of the enemy's offensive plan, the direction of his main attack, and the rational distribution of his own forces. In 1941, the Soviet command determined the true direction of the enemy's main attack already during the outbreak of hostilities. So he had to urgently transfer large forces from the southwestern to the western direction, which in a highly dynamic situation, with constant air strikes against

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nick on communications took too long. And since the reserves entered the battle in parts, the enemy managed to achieve decisive successes even before the corresponding defensive grouping of Soviet troops was formed.

A similar situation arose in 1942, when, contrary to the forecasts of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, the enemy delivered the main blow not in the western, but in the south-western direction. And again, in a hurry, the Soviet command had to

to organize the regrouping of troops from near Moscow and from other directions, first near Voronezh, and then near Stalingrad and the North Caucasus in order to localize the gaps that had formed. And again, a lot of time was lost, which was one of the main reasons for the deep breakthrough of the enemy.

Only in 1943 did the Headquarters of the All-Russian Supreme Command manage to unmistakably establish in three months the plan of the upcoming strategic offensive of the German fascist troops and to prepare comprehensively to repel their strike. Thanks to this, on the Kursk Bulge, which accounted for 13% of the entire length of the Soviet-German front, the Soviet command, without much risk for itself, concentrated in advance about a third of the personnel of troops and combat aircraft, almost half of the tanks and self-propelled guns, more than a quarter of the guns and mortars of the army in the field. . This played a decisive role in the disruption of German plans.

A characteristic feature of strategic defensive operations was not only their spatial scope, but also the significant number of troops, forces and assets involved. This is clearly confirmed by the data in Table 5 (p. 315).

This shows that the majority of defensive operations were carried out on a front of 450-650 km, with a withdrawal depth of Soviet troops up to 300-600 km or more. The composition of the troops during the operations changed. As a rule, at the first stage of the operation, due to losses, it was sharply reduced, but then, as the reserves approached, it increased.

Almost all strategic defensive operations in 1941 were carried out with an acute shortage of forces and a significant superiority of the enemy. In 1942, the overall correlation of forces improved, but in the main directions the enemy, as before, still had the opportunity to achieve a certain superiority in forces and means: Most often, in these directions, the ratio of forces and means was 1.5-1.7 : 1 for personnel, 1.5-2.5: 1 for artillery and 1.5-2.8: 1 for tanks. Subsequently, the situation changed dramatically. Beginning in 1943, in all defensive operations, both overall superiority and superiority in the directions of the main attacks usually remained on the side of the Soviet troops.

Most strategic defensive operations were a complex set of various operations and combat operations. In their system, several simultaneous and successive front and army defensive operations were usually carried out. Thus, the Moscow strategic defensive operation consisted of the Vyazemsky, Mozhaish-Maloyaroslavets, Kalinin, Orel-Bryansk, Tula and Klinско-Solnechnogorsk operations of the fronts operating near Moscow, that is, of six front-line operations united by the common goals of the Supreme High Command. The situation was similar with the Kyiv, Leningrad, Stalingrad and North Caucasian strategic defensive operations. In a number of cases, in the course of strategic defense, private offensive operations with limited targets were also carried out, combat operations were conducted by formations and formations of long-range aviation and the Air Defense Forces of the country. Even in 1941 and in the summer of 1942, along with defensive operations, Soviet troops carried out over 50 separate offensive operations on an army scale, during which individual enemy groupings were defeated and their forces were pinned down."

Forced defense

- limited training time under the active influence of the enemy - consistent retention of advantageous lines

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WESTERN FRONT

Front line by September 30 Front line by October 30

blue The position of the Nazi front line troops by October 10 by December 5

Scheme 44. Moscow strategic defensive operation (September 30-December 5, 1941)

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During the first period of the war, practically all strategic defensive operations were carried out without prior preparation. It could not have been otherwise, since the defense then had a forced character. In the second period, most often the defense was planned in advance even before the start of the enemy offensive. The defending troops, as a rule, already created a developed system of defensive lines and a corresponding grouping of forces, which allowed them to meet enemy strikes in a higher readiness.

Fundamental changes during the war years took place in the construction of strategic defense. The main trend was to increase its stability by increasing the depth of separation of troops, defensive positions, lanes and lines, and improving the engineering equipment of the area. At the beginning of the war, due to an acute shortage of forces, the defending troops, as a rule, had a shallow one-echelon formation. Only some groupings were deployed in two echelons. Many defensive operations began in the absence of strategic and sometimes operational reserves. The latter were usually formed already in the course of repelling an enemy offensive. However, already during the border battles, it became obvious that without strong reserves it was impossible to withstand the deep blows of the enemy's powerful tank groupings. Therefore, in the defense of Moscow in the western strategic direction, two strong operational echelons are created: the first - as part of the Western and Bryansk Fronts, and the second - as part of the Reserve Front. However, the overall depth of troop separation still remained small. Near Moscow, for example, it did not exceed 40-80 km. It is clear that such a defense could not be sufficiently effective and often relatively easy to overcome.

In subsequent years, the depth of echeloning of defensive groupings of troops steadily increased. In 1942 it began to be 100-120 km, and in the summer of 1943 it increased 2-2.5 times and reached 300 km on the Kursk salient. Strong second echelons and reserves were created there in the armies and on the fronts. Behind the fronts of the first echelon, before the start of the Battle of Kursk, the Steppe Front was deployed as the second echelon of the defensive grouping of Soviet troops. All this ensured high reliability and impenetrable strategic defense.

An increase in the depth of the engineering equipment of the terrain, the creation of a developed system of defensive lines and lines was also of exceptionally great importance for increasing its effectiveness. Already in 1941, their accelerated construction began in all three strategic directions. So, on June 24, 1941, a decision was made to create the Luga defense line at the turn along the river. Meadows from the Gulf of Finland to the lake. Ilmen, which was supposed to cover the approaches to Leningrad from the south. With its creation and the subsequent construction of the Krasnogvardeisky fortified area and defensive lines directly on the outskirts of Leningrad, the depth of defense in the Leningrad direction began to be 100-120 km. The next day, June 25, a decision is made to build a strategic defensive line in the western direction along the Western Dvina from Polotsk to Vitebsk and along the Dnieper from Orsha to Loev, then, on June 29, on the construction of the Rzhev-Vyazemsky defensive line, and finally, on July 18, the Mozhaisk line of defense. As a result, by mid-July, the depth of strategic defense, thanks to the measures taken, reached 250-300 km. In August-September, as the enemy advanced from the Dnieper to the east, the strategic defense was built up by the creation of the Moscow defense zone, which included a security zone and two defensive lines: the main (Moscow region) and urban (on the outskirts of Moscow). Measures were also taken to build a whole system of rear defensive lines. In particular, in October 1941, the GKO decided to

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the construction of a rear state defensive line along the eastern bank of the Volga with defensive contours around large cities - Yaroslavl, Saratov, Stalingrad, Astrakhan. In the southwestern direction, defensive lines and lines were created to cover Kyiv, Odessa, Sevastopol, Donbass. Their construction was carried out by engineering and sapper units, and then by sapper armies and forces of the local population.

In the spring of 1942, huge defensive work was launched in the Kursk, Voronezh, Stalingrad directions, as well as in the North Caucasus. The construction of rear defensive lines ensured a constant increase in the depth of the strategic defense prepared in engineering terms. So, if in 1941 in the Moscow direction (by the beginning of the battle near Moscow) it was 250-300 km, then in 1942 (in the southwestern direction) it increased to 600 km3.

Unfortunately, the preparation of many defensive lines could not be completed on time. With a large volume